CHRISTIAN EGYPT
ANCIENT AND MODERN

SECOND REVISED EDITION

BY

OTTO F.A. MEINARDUS. Ph.D.

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FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

Dr. Otto Meinardus is an active member of the Society for Coptic Archaeology. The Society has published the fruits of some of his research and study in its Bulletin and in its other publications. He is the author of a valuable contribution to the study of monasticism in Egypt, « Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts ».

The present volume gives a thorough and complete picture of Christian Egypt, ancient and modern. It contains much original research, and a number of little known facts, as well as the broad outlines of its historical development and present condition. It will certainly be of great interest and usefulness to specialists no less than to the general public.

The « Cahiers d'Histoire Egyptienne » must be congratulated for making this important volume available, thereby rendering a considerable service to the diffusion of knowledge and information on an important aspect of Egyptian History and Civilization.

Dr. Otto Meinardus has a great capacity for accuracy, coupled with great enthusiasm and perspicacity. He has devoted much of these qualities to Coptic studies. His numerous friends and well-wishers hope he will continue for many years to come in this fruitful field of work.

MIRRIT BOUTROS GHALI
President of the Society
for Coptic Archaeology.

Cairo, January 1965.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

At Rome, in Greece, in Syria and elsewhere, the ancient civilizations have left behind them magnificent civil monuments : theatres, amphitheatres, circuses, triumphal arches, forums, palaces, etc.

In Egypt, on the other hand, nothing remains standing from the five thousand years of Pharaonic history which has not a religious origin, either temples or tombs. Of the vast hieroglyphic literature, whether written on stone or papyrus, one can count very few texts which are not religious, and it is rare, indeed, to find poems of love or war. In Muslim Egypt, in mediaeval times as to-day, the theocracy has been stronger than calif, sultan, khedive, or governors. Every regime has known and felt, as did Napoleon himself, that disregard for religion would destroy it ; and they always took into consideration the religious instinct of the people.

The people of Egypt, in turn polytheistic, Christian, and Muslim, is religious to an extreme. In the times of persecution, we have examples of whole groups of people going to martyrdom, and often even inviting it voluntarily, rather than deny their God and their Saviour Jesus Christ. This ardour for the New Faith is further exemplified in the ascetic practices of the monks and hermits in their warfare against the Evil One, an asceticism which seemed often to pass the limits of human endurance. We are not speaking of the learned and the philosophers of Alexandria, but of the mass of the people, of those peasants and craftsmen, of those women and children whom religion ennobled.

The works of Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Didymus the Blind, and the Christological dogmas of Saint Athanasius and Saint Cyril have for fifteen centuries occupied a prominent place in the teaching of the Universal Church,

and there can scarcely be a theologian who does not know of them.

The most important and the most western religious orders who read during the novitiate the « Treaty on Perfection » of Rodriguez on the one hand, and the most modern Institutes who study the fifth century account of John Cassian about the monks of Egypt on the other hand, know that community life with its work and duties, under the rule of poverty, chastity and obedience, began in the deserts of the Thebaid and Nitria sixteen centuries ago. Following the steps of SS. Antony, Pachomius and Macarius, thousands of men and women from all classes of life, both urban and rural, have adopted this supernatural life.

The Bollandists as well as other scholars and travellers have never ceased to study this remarkable phenomenon of a whole people adopting in spite of ignorance and the desires of the flesh, the most rigourous asceticism with the greatest enthusiasm.

Even when we make allowance for a certain amount of hagiographical exaggeration, the fact still remains that the courage and the number of the martyrs of Egypt constitutes « Acta » which few countries in the world can equalize. If the actual Christian Era begins with the Birth of Christ and the Muslim Era begins with the flight of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina (the Hegira), the Era of the Christians of Egypt begins, paradoxical as it may sound, with the period when martyrdoms were so numerous (the Diocletian Era 284 A.D.) that they constituted, as it were, a new birth of the Church.

Theologians, spiritual directors and historians in the West, even more than in the East, know of this wealth of the Church of Egypt in times past. Archaeologists are interested also, but for them there has been need of both will and care. Indeed, it must be admitted that here in Egypt the vestiges of Christianity are less well preserved, less beautiful and less original than the Pharaonic monuments. The latter represent thirty centuries of history, whilst the former represent only

sixteen centuries. Moreover, there are few Christian monuments that have survived a systematic destruction as well as the vicissitudes of a thousand years.

Dom Chautard, abbot of the Trappe de Sept-Fonds, once related to us one of his great disappointments in this matter. Passing through Alexandria on his return from the Far East, he was overjoyed that he could disembark exactly on May 2nd, the feast of Saint Athanasius, Doctor of the Church and Patriarch of Alexandria, whose huge statue greets one, on entering the Basilica of Saint Peter at Rome. This coincidence, he thought, would enable him to see the city en fête in commemoration of one of its most outstanding glories, or, at least, to assist at some splendid liturgical ceremony in honour of the Saint. Alas, he found no one who remembered Saint Athanasius, nor even a church Catholic or Orthodox, Latin, Greek or Coptic which was dedicated to him. More recently we had to dissuade a Benedictine scholar who wished, in his ignorance, to come to Alexandria to visit the Cathedral of Saint Mark, the Caesareum and the Catechetical School.

The scholarly authors of the « Description of Egypt », precise, competent and encyclopaedic as they were, showed little interest in its Christian archaeology. Apart from the Society for Coptic Archaeology which is devoted entirely to the study of Coptic Christian Egypt in all its aspects, the other learned societies such as the French, Swiss, German and Polish institutes which have their headquarters in Cairo, are occupied with Egyptology or the study of Muslim Egypt. There may be remarked, however, in various quarters, a welcome sign of an awakening of interest in Christian Egypt.

The Christian archaeology of Egypt should be known not only on account of its importance for the history of art, or for the sake of history itself, but as a source of instruction for interpreting the present situation, and as a monument of uninterrupted life. In contrast to the Pharaonic religion dead since long centuries, in spite of a solitary devotee — an Englishwoman which it had at Abydos in 1960 — and in contrast to the Christianity of Carthage and Hippo of which

there are now only a few ruins, the Christianity of Egypt is a reality.

The Christianity of Egypt can claim nearly nineteen centuries of vitality. It is neither an archaeology, as the Pharaonic temples, nor an anachronism, as the acetylene lamps at certain stations in the provinces, nor a survival, as the horse-drawn carriage occasionally seen in the streets of Cairo. It has not disappeared, as in Tunis, once rendered famous by SS. Augustine and Cyprian, as in Turkey from which the faithful (Greeks and Armenians) have been forced to emigrate to all parts of the world. It has not become something foreign as in Algeria. It is living, autochthonic, deeply rooted, correctly fermented by a leaven from overseas.

The Coptic Orthodox Church directed by a patriarch and some thirty bishops, numbers to-day more than four million faithful who are among the most industrious and patriotic of the people of Egypt. Indeed, it has taken part in all the struggles of the nation and has shared in its sufferings.

The other Christians of Egypt, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, number about five hundred thousand. Educated and organized, they are characterized by an intensive scholastic activity which has often preceded that of the State.

The Christians of Egypt who have strong family ties, do not live in a ghetto ; they are engaged in all branches of public service, in the learned professions, in industry and in agriculture. They are to be found in all classes of society and throughout the country.

The belfries of the numerous churches in the towns and villages are a sign both of the permanence of the Christian Faith as well as of the peaceful co-existence of the Qurân and the Gospel.

Though very much of the present, the Christians of Egypt are not cut off from their past nor from their traditions. This permanence is ensured by the Coptic Liturgy which embraces all the stages of human life, as the seasons of the year. It commemorates the wonderful heritage of the

preaching of Saint Mark ; the innumerable martyrs who in the course of the centuries have borne witness to Jesus Christ by their blood ; the illustrious Doctors of the Church who strove to throw light on the Mystery of the Word made Flesh ; the monks who caused the desert to blossom with evangelical virtues.

The book of Otto Meinardus is placed in this perspective. It is a timely production and it answers a very real need. It embraces both the past and the present in its continuity as well as in its discontinuity. It is a balanced, clear and well documented work, useful both to enquirers, travellers, and those of the East and the West seeking information on the subject.

It is the outcome of a very considerable amount of research, and it provides exactly what we have been in need of for a very long time. We did not know who would have the courage to undertake such a Guide, or who would have the ability to accomplish it. And here it is, at last, a most welcome realization ! We offer our thanks to the author, our friend, for this valuable contribution to the study of « Christian Egypt, Ancient and Modern ».

HENRY HABIB AYROUT, S.J.

Cairo, January 1965.

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST EDITION

With the ever increasing number of travellers and tourists visiting Egypt, and the greatly improved facilities for travel within the country, the need for a guide for those who wish to see the Christian Churches, Monuments and Sites in the Land of the Pharaohs, now becomes imperative. This volume, therefore, is intended to provide such information as cannot be generally obtained at tourist-agencies and hotels.

In the past, and still to this day, large numbers of visitors flock annually to the ancient Pharaonic Monuments in Luxor and Aswân, to behold the magnificent achievements of the Ancient Egyptians. However, few of them realize that Egypt was once a great Christian Nation with its churches, monasteries, institutions and culture established throughout the Nile Valley. Indeed, one of the objects of the present volume is to encourage scholars and visitors to depart from the beaten tracks of the tourists, and to discover for themselves some of the ancient and modern Christian Monuments. Those who have the ambition and an interest for adventure can still use the age-old means of transport, whether it be the sailing-boat, the camel, the donkey or the horse-cart. For that matter, some of the sites mentioned in this book can be reached only by these means. Christian Egypt, with its long and distinguished history, can be rediscovered.

The History of Christian Egypt begins with the traditional preaching of the Evangelist St. Mark at Alexandria. It includes the great days of Alexandrian theology, of which

St. Athanasius was the exponent. It saw the rise of an important Christian institution, that of Monasticism, which was destined to spread throughout the world. During the Middle Ages, the Egyptian Church kept the lamp of Christian Faith burning amid trials and tribulations of all kinds. To-day, there exists a large number of Christian communities belonging to the Eastern and Western Churches.

In order to provide an idea of the various traditions of the Christian Communities in Egypt, the present volume furnishes the reader with useful information regarding the principal churches, institutions and organizations.

It must not be thought that this information was easily acquired. Anyone who has lived in the Near East will know how difficult it is to obtain historical or topographical facts about a community, a church or a monument, what patient endeavour is required to sift the information supplied so as to reach a correct appraisal of the facts. Yet, in spite of these obstacles, it is hoped that the information provided will be found both reliable and useful.

In the compilation of this volume, I wish, in duty bound, to acknowledge my indebtedness to the ecclesiastical authorities, who most graciously offered their collaboration. Especially, I wish to thank Prof. Dr. O.H.E. Khs-Burmester, to whom I am indebted for many valuable suggestions. Not only has he encouraged this study, but he has also spent many hours discussing the various theological and historical data, which are presented in this volume, with me.

In conclusion, I should like to express my gratitude to Dr. Raymond F. McLain, Chancellor of the American University in Cairo, who, many years ago, suggested to me the need for an inclusive volume on Christian Egypt — Ancient and Modern. Moreover, I owe a debt of deep gratitude to

Mr. Mirrit Boutros Ghali and the Reverend Father Henry Habib Ayrout, S. J., Rector of the Collège de la Sainte Famille, for kindly consenting to write the Foreword and the Preface, and to Mr. and Mrs. Fernand Debono, the publishers of the *Cahiers d'Histoire Egyptienne,* for their interest and determination in publishing this volume.

OTTO MEINARDUS

Cairo
The feast commemorating the
Oecumenical Council of Nicaea
November 18, 1964.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In duty bound, I hereby acknowledge my deep gratitude to the publishers and the learned societies for their kind permission to use some of my articles which appeared in their publications. Wherever necessary, corrections and additions to the original manuscript have been made.

Chapter III was published under the title « An Examination of the Traditions pertaining to the Relics of St. Mark » in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica,* XXXVI, ii, 1970, 348-376. Chapter VI, 2, appeared as « A Comparative Study on the Sources of the Synaxarium of the Coptic Church » in the *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte,* XVII, 1964, 111-155. Chapter VI, 6, comprises a lecture given by me at the Institut d'Egypte which was subsequently published as « Some Theological and Sociological Aspects of the Coptic Mulid » in the Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, XLIV, 1971, 7-25. Chapters VII, VIII and XIX, 1-5, are partly based on Prof. Dr. O.H.E. Khs-Burmester's Guide to the Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo, Cairo, 1955, though all information has been duly verified. Portions of chapters IX and X constituted a study entitled « Ancient and Modern Churches of Alexandria » in Oriens Christianus, XLVIII, 1964, 163-179. Chapters XIV, XVI, XVII, 6, XXIV, 1 and XXV are based upon material which has appeared in my volume *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts,* Cairo, The American University in Cairo Press, 1961. Chapter XVII, 1, was published as « Patriarchal Cells in the Nile Delta » in *Orientalia Suecana,* XIV, 1965, 51-61. Chapter XVII, 2, appeared under the title « Singar, a Historical and Geographical Study » in the *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte,* XVIII, 1965, 175-179. Chapter XVII, 5, constituted an article entitled « Notes on Terenuthis-Tarrana », in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Egypte,* XXXIX, 1966, 161-176. Parts of Chapter

XXII are based on an article « The Coptic Monuments in the Nile Valley between Sohag and Aswan » in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Egypte,* XXXV, 1962, 177-215, while parts of chapter XXIII appeared in the same bulletin under the title « The Laura of Naqlûn », *BSGE,* XL, 1967, 173-185. Chapter XXIV, 2, was a study entitled « The Hermits of Wâdî Rayân » in *Studia Orientalia Christiana Collectanea,* XI, 1966, 293-318. Chapter XXXI appeared in the same bulletin as « The Itinerary of the Holy Family in Egypt », *SOC,* VII, 1962, 3-34.

I should like to express my gratitude to the Director and Staff of the American University in Cairo Press. Several years ago they suggested the need for a second revised edition of this book. Their determination and patience in the lengthy publishing process was finally rewarded with the appearance of this volume.

Koblenz, 1977.

CHRISTIAN EGYPT
ANCIENT AND MODERN

Coptic Funerary Stele, Coptic Museum, Old Cairo

St. Menas, Marble Stele, Graeco Roman Museum, Alexandria

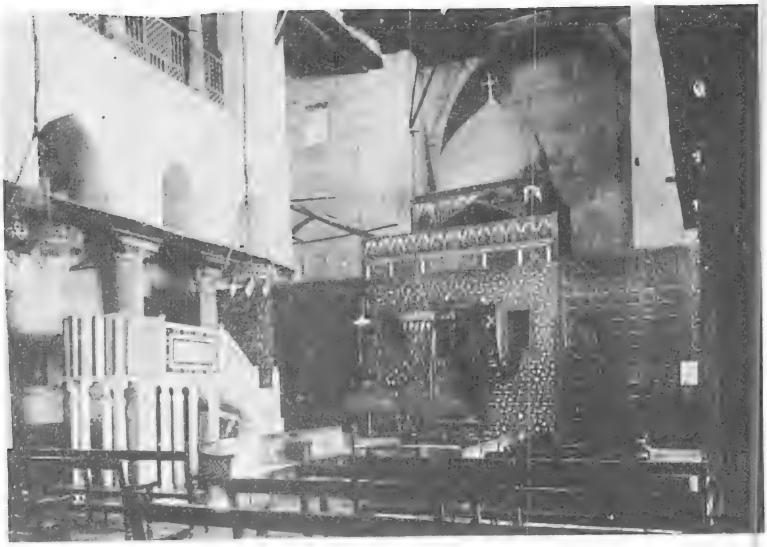
Wood carving, the Nativity,
Church of St. Sergius, Old Cairo

The Three Macarii of the Wadi al Natrun,
Monastery of St. Macarius

Altar screen with Apostles and Coptic Saints in the Monastery of St. Bishoi, Wadi al-Natrun

Modern Coptic Iconography by Ishaq Fanus

The Interior of the Church of the Holy Virgin, al-Mu'allaqah, Old Cairo



The Interior of the Church of St. Sergius, Old Cairo

The Martyrdom of St. Mark in Alexandria

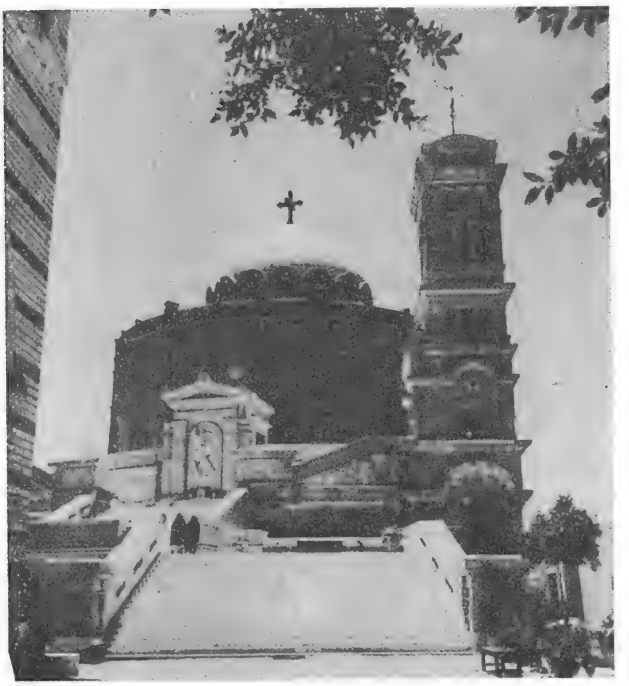
The Translation of the Relics of St Mark from Venice to Alexandria

Wall paintings in the Crypt of the Cathedral of St. Mark in Cairo

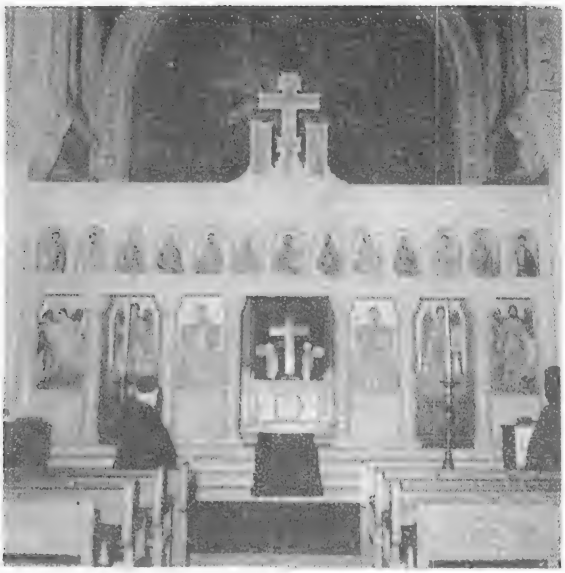
Church of the Holy Virgin, Zaitun, Heliopolis

Armenian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator, Cairo

Chaldean Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Heliopolis



Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, Old Cairo



Melkite Cathedral of the Resurrection, Faggalah

Dominican Chapel of the Holy Virgin, Abbasiyah

Catholic Church of St. Theresa of the Child of Jesus, Shubra

Coptic Evangelical Church, Qasr al-Doubara, Cairo

Pope Shenute III as Abuna Antunius al-Suriani

Bishop Abraham of the Fayyum

The Church of the Holy Virgin, Monastery of St. Samuel, Qamula

The Necropolis at Apa Hor, Minya

Hermopolis Magna, the Basilica

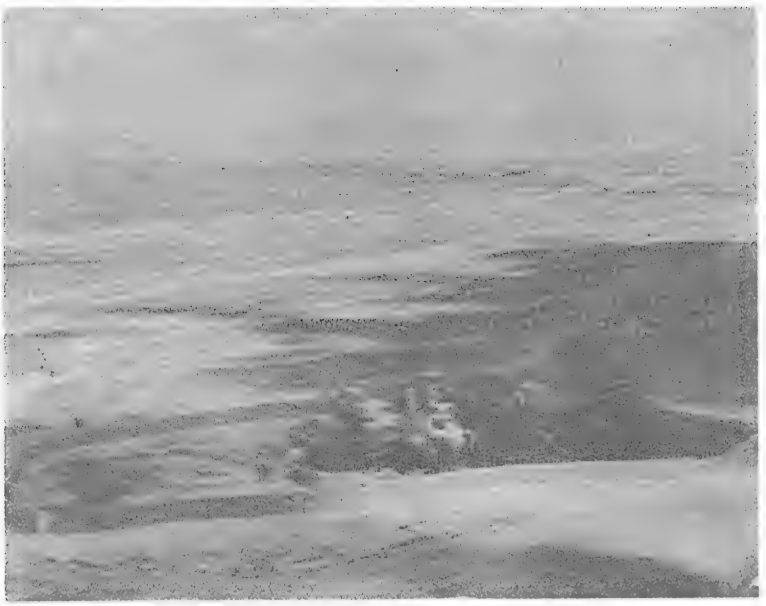
The Church of the Holy Virgin, Gabal al-Tair

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin, Dair al-Muharraq

The White Monastery at Sohâg

The Monastery of St. Victor, Qamula

The Monastery of the Martyrs, Esna



The Monastery of St. Antony

The Church of St. Michel, the Monastery of St. Paul the Theban

Gabal Katerin, Sinai

The Chapel of the Holy Trinity, Gabal Musa, Sinai

MAPS

Places referred to on the map and their corresponding ancient names

Ahnásiah	*Herakleopolis*
Ashmunain	*Hermopolis Magna*
Bahnasa	*Oxyrhynchus*
Bani Hassan	*Speos Artemidos*
Bikha Iysous	*(?) Sakha*
Bilbais	*Phelbes*
Farama	*Pelusium*
Gabal al-Tair	*Akhoris*
Matariya	*Heliopolis*
Mit Sammanud	*Sebennytos*
Musturud	*al-Mahammah*
Old Cairo	*Babylon*
Qusia	*Cusae*
Samalut	*Cynopolis*
Sanabu	*Pepleu*
Suez	*Clysma*
Tell al-Bastah	*Bubastis*
Terrana	*Terenuthis*
Wadi al-Natrun	*Scetis*

LEGEND

Inhabited Monastery

Uninhabited Monastery

Ruined Monastery

Monastic Dependency

Pilgrimage Church

Ancient Basilica

Inhabited Hermitage

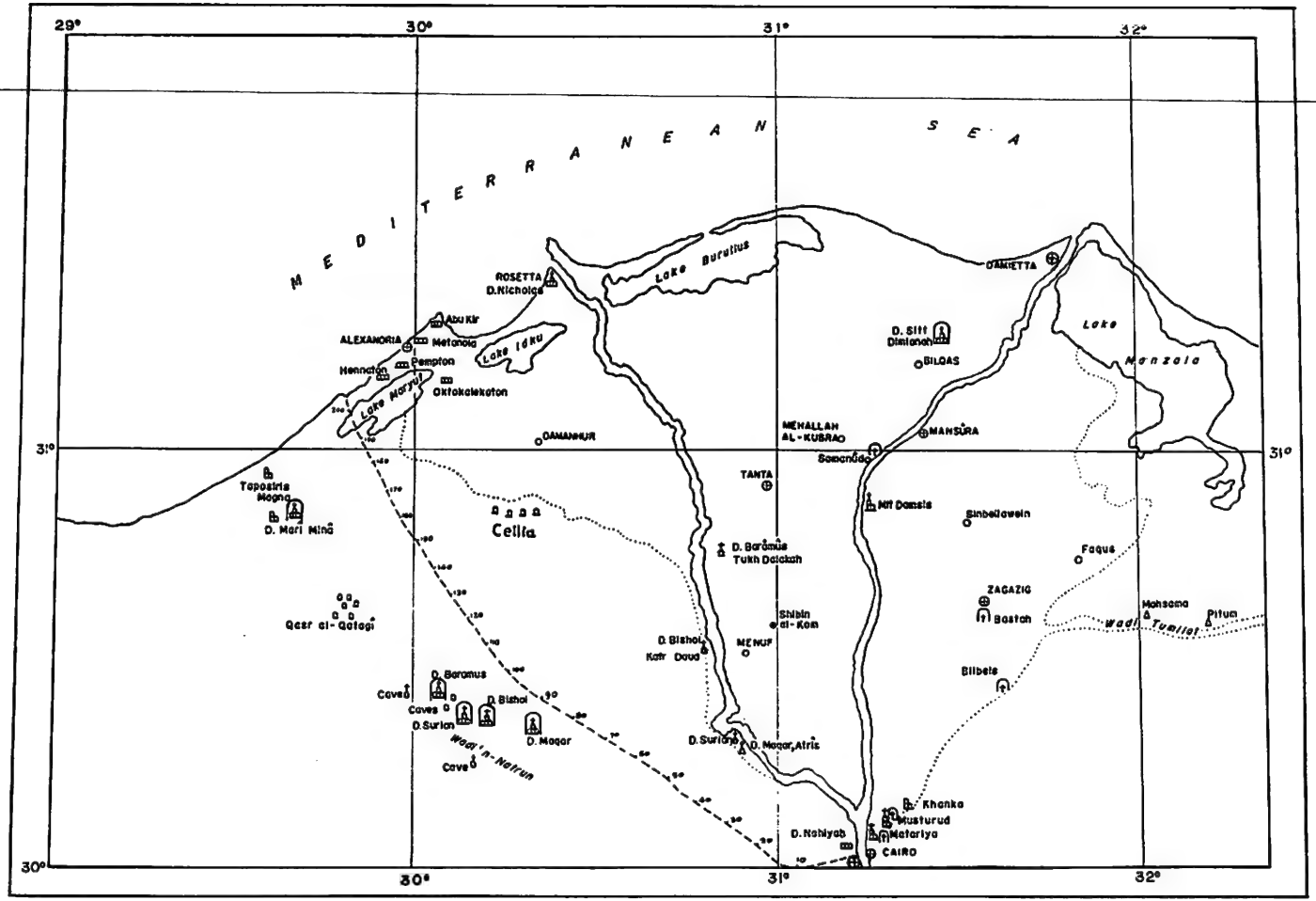
Uninhabited Hermitage

Episcopal See

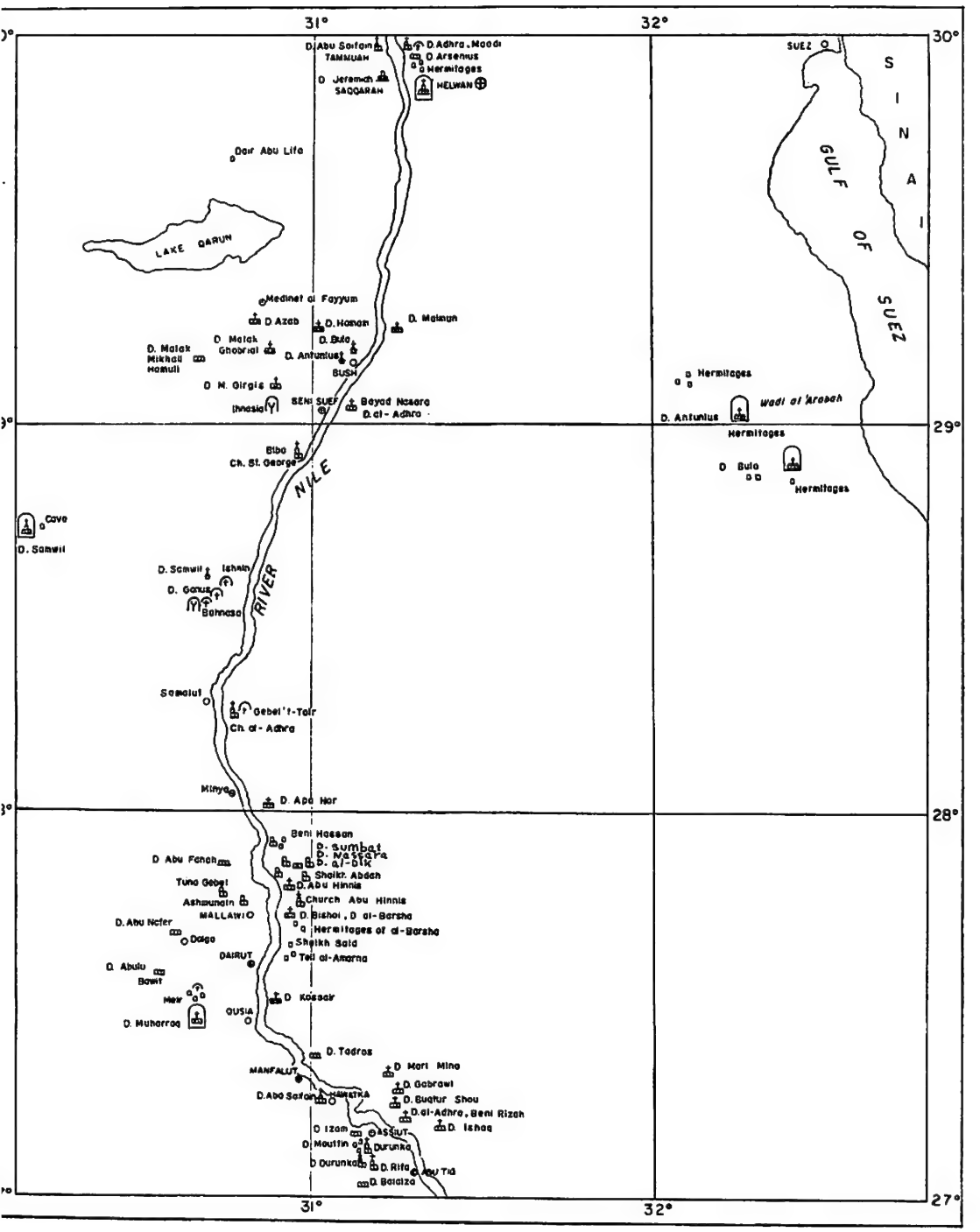
Site visited by Holy Family according to Christian or Muslim tradition

D. Dair

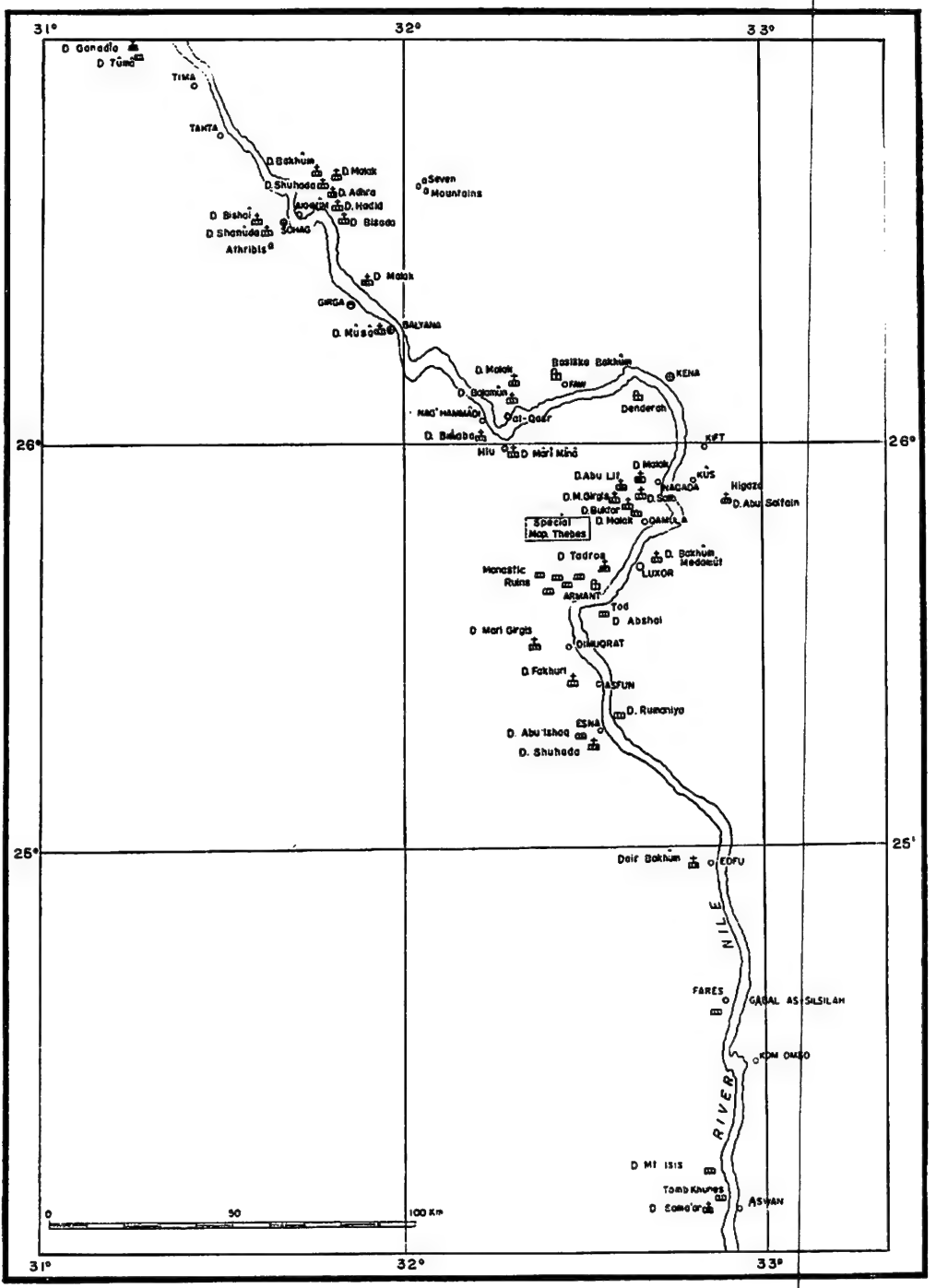
MAP I

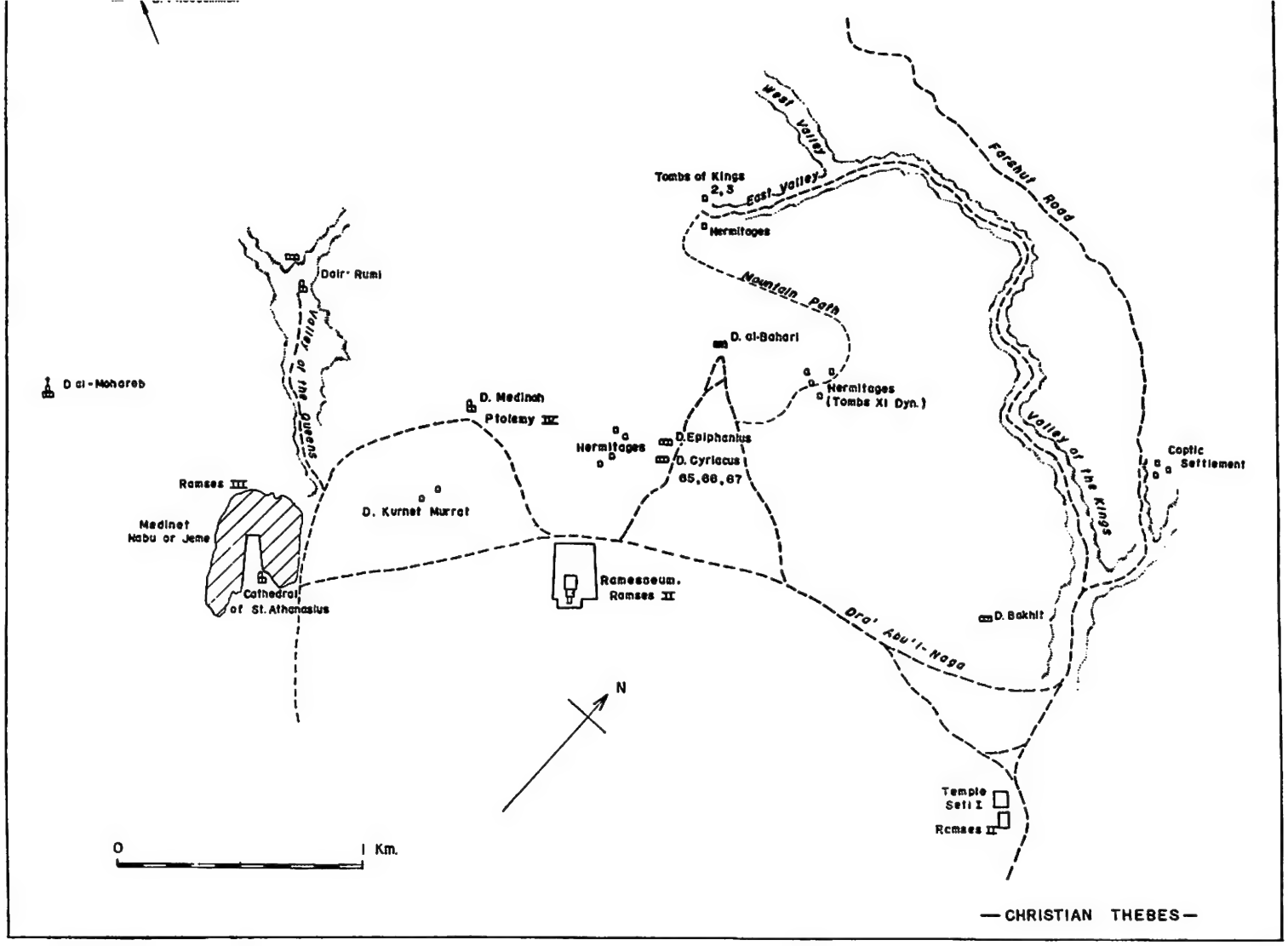

29°
30°
31°
32°
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Lake Burullus
ROSETTA
D. Nicholas
DAMIETTA
Abu Kir
ALEXANDRIA
Metanolis
Lake Idku
Hennaton
Pempton
Lake Maryut
Oktokalekaton
D. Sitt Dimiankh
BILQAS
Lake Manzala
DAMANHUR
MEHALLAH AL-KUBRAO
MANSURA
Samanud
TANTA
Tapostris Magna
D. Mari Mina
Cellia
Mit Damsis
Sinbellawein
D. Baramus Tukh Dalkah
Faqus
ZAGAZIG
Qasr al-Qotagi
Shibin al-Kom
Bastah
Mahsama
Pitum
Wadi Tumilat
D. Bishoi
Kafr Daud
MENUF
Bilbeis
D. Baramus
Caves
D. Bishoi
D. Surion
D. Maqar
Wadi 'n-Natrun
D. Surion
D. Maqar, Atris
Khanka
Musturud
Matariya
D. Nahiyah
CAIRO

MAP II


31°
32°
30°
29°
28°
27°
D. Abu Sefein
TAMMUAH
D. Adhra, Maadi
D. Arsenius
Hermitages
D. Jeremiah
SAQQARAH
HELWAN
Deir Abu Lifa
LAKE QARUN
Medinet el Fayyum
D. Azab
D. Hanan
D. Malaun
D. Malak Ghobrial
D. Malak Mikhail Hamuli
D. Bulo
D. Antonius
BUSH
D. M. Girgis
Ihnasia
BENI SUEF
Beyad Nasara
D. el-Adhra
SUEZ
S I N A I
GULF OF SUEZ
Hermitages
Wadi el 'Arabah
D. Antonius
Hermitages
D. Bulo
Hermitages
Biba
Ch. St. George
NILE
RIVER
Cave
D. Samwil
D. Samwil
Ishmin
D. Genus
Behnasa
Samalut
Gebel 't-Tair
Ch. el-Adhra
Minya
D. Abu Hor
Beni Hasan
D. Sumbat
D. Nassara
D. el-Dik
D. Abu Fenah
Tuna Gebel
Ashmunein
MALLAWI
D. Sheikh Abdeh
D. Abu Hinnis
Church Abu Hinnis
D. Abu Nefer
Dalga
D. Bishoi, D. el-Barsha
Hermitages of el-Barsha
Sheikh Said
DAIRUT
Tell el-Amarna
D. Abulu
Bawit
Mew
D. Muharraq
QUSIA
D. Kosseir
D. Tadros
MANFALUT
D. Mari Mina
D. Gabrawi
D. Abu Sefein
HAMRA
D. Buqtur Shou
D. el-Adhra, Beni Rizah
D. Izam
ASSIUT
D. Ishaq
D. Moutlin
Durunka
D. Durunka
D. Rifa
Abu Tig
D. Balaiza

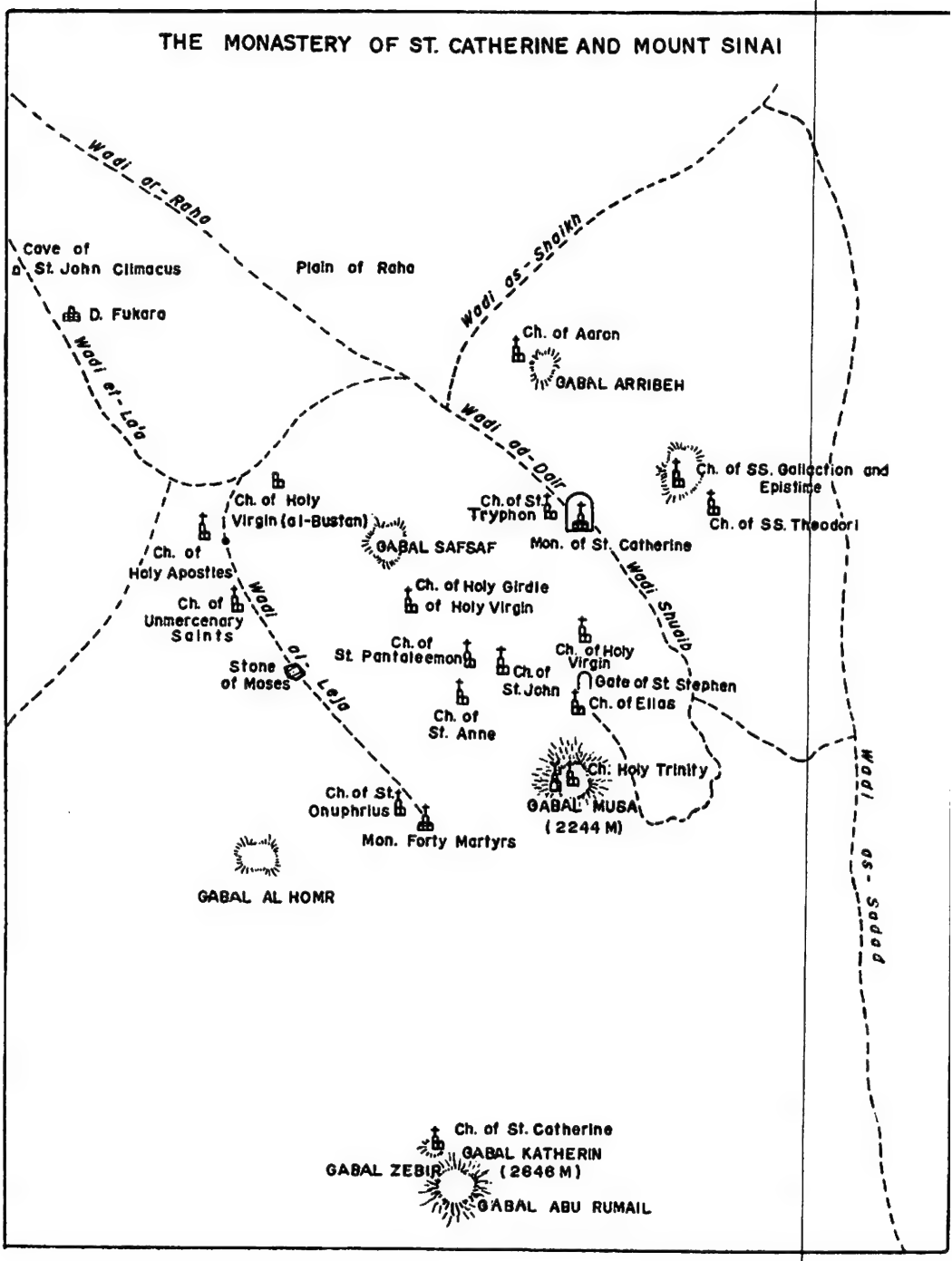
MAP III


31°
32°
33°
26°
25°
D Ganadla
D Tuma
TIMA
TANTA
D Bakhum
D Shuhada
D Makak
D Adhra
D Hadid
D Bisada
D Bishoi
D Shanuda
Athribis
SOHAG
Seven Mountains
D Makak
GIRGA
D Musa
BALYANA
D Makak
D Bakhum
NAG' HAMMADI
Qal-Qasr
D Balaba
Hiu
D Mari Kina
Basilika Bakhum
OFAW
KENA
Denderah
KFT
D Makak
D Abu Lifi
KUS
NAGADA
Higoza
D. Abu Saifain
D M Girgis
D Sam
D Bukor
Special Map Thebes
D Makak
QAMULA
D Tadros
D. Bakhum Medadeit
Monastic Ruins
LUXOR
ARMANT
Tod
D Abshoi
D Mari Girgis
DIMUQRAT
D Fakhuri
CASFUN
D. Rumaniya
ESNA
D. Abu Ishaq
D. Shuhada
Deir Bakhum
EDFU
NILE
FARES
GABAL AS SILSILAH
KOM OMBO
RIVER
D Mt ISIS
Tomb Khnumes
D Esma'ora
ASWAN
0
50
100 Km

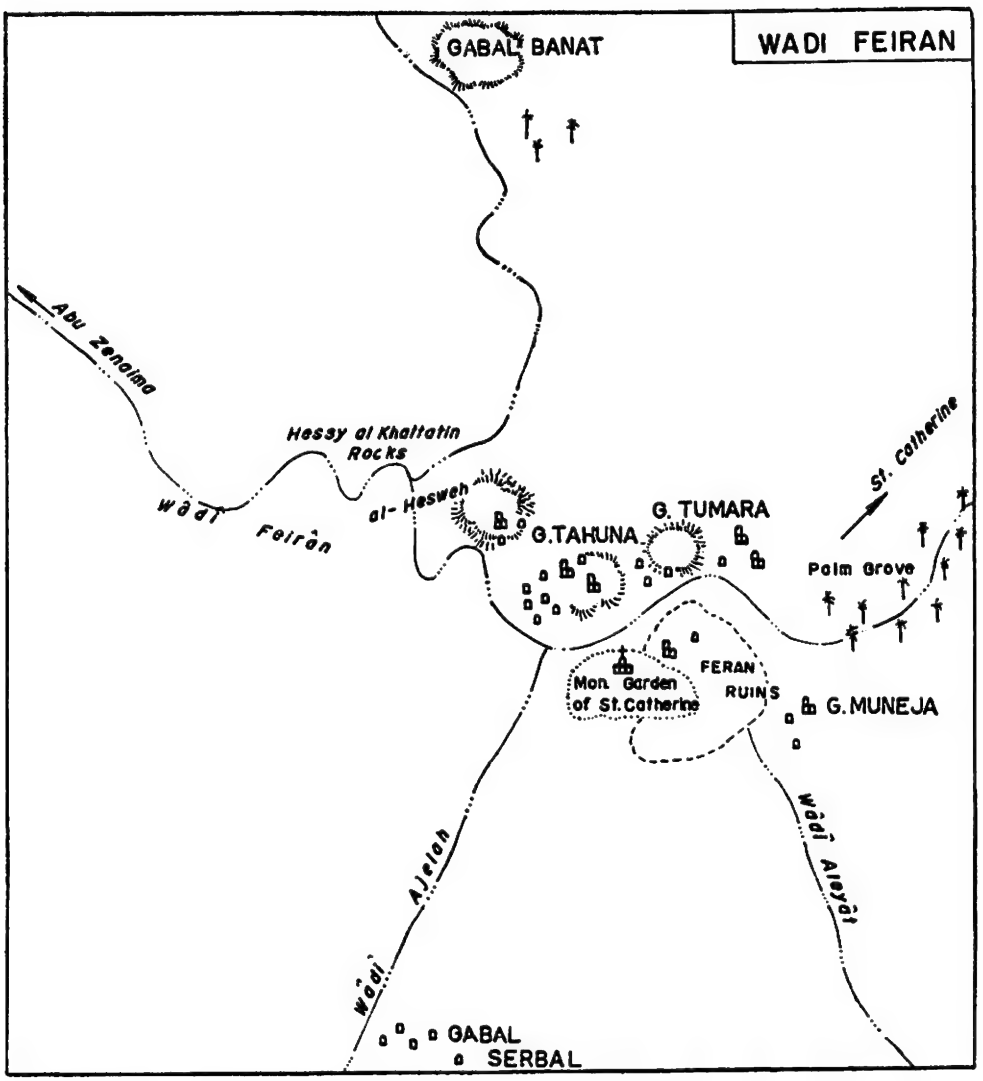

West Valley
Tombs of Kings
2, 3
East Valley
Hermitages
Forshut Road
Mountain Path
Deir' Rumi
Valley of the Queens
D. al-Bahari
D. al-Moharab
D. Medinah
Ptolemy IV
Hermitages
(Tombs XI Dyn.)
Hermitages
D. Epiphanius
D. Cyriacus
65, 66, 67
Valley of the Kings
Coptic
Settlement
Ramses III
Medinet
Habu or Jeme
D. Kurnet Murrat
Cathedral
of St. Athanasius
Ramesseum.
Ramses II
D. Bakhit
Dra' Abu'l-Naga
N
Temple
Seti I
Ramses II
0
1 Km.
—CHRISTIAN THEBES—

MAP IV

MAP V


THE MONASTERY OF ST. CATHERINE AND MOUNT SINAI
Wadi ar-Raha
Cave of St. John Climacus
Plain of Raha
D. Fukara
Wadi ash-Sheikh
Ch. of Aaron
GABAL ARRIBEH
Wadi et-Lafa
Wadi ad-Dair
Ch. of SS. Galaction and Epistime
Ch. of Holy Virgin (al-Bustan)
Ch. of St. Tryphon
Ch. of SS. Theodori
GABAL SAFSAF
Mon. of St. Catherine
Ch. of Holy Apostles
Wadi Shuaib
Ch. of Holy Girdle of Holy Virgin
Ch. of Unmercenary Saints
Wadi al-Leja
Ch. of St. Pantaleemon
Ch. of Holy Virgin
Stone of Moses
Ch. of St. John
Gate of St. Stephen
Ch. of Elias
Ch. of St. Anne
Ch. Holy Trinity
Ch. of St. Onuphrius
GABAL MUSA (2244 M)
Mon. Forty Martyrs
GABAL AL HOMR
Wadi as-Sodod
Ch. of St. Catherine
GABAL KATHERIN (2646 M)
GABAL ZEBIR
GABAL ABU RUMAIL

MAP VI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al-Heswen
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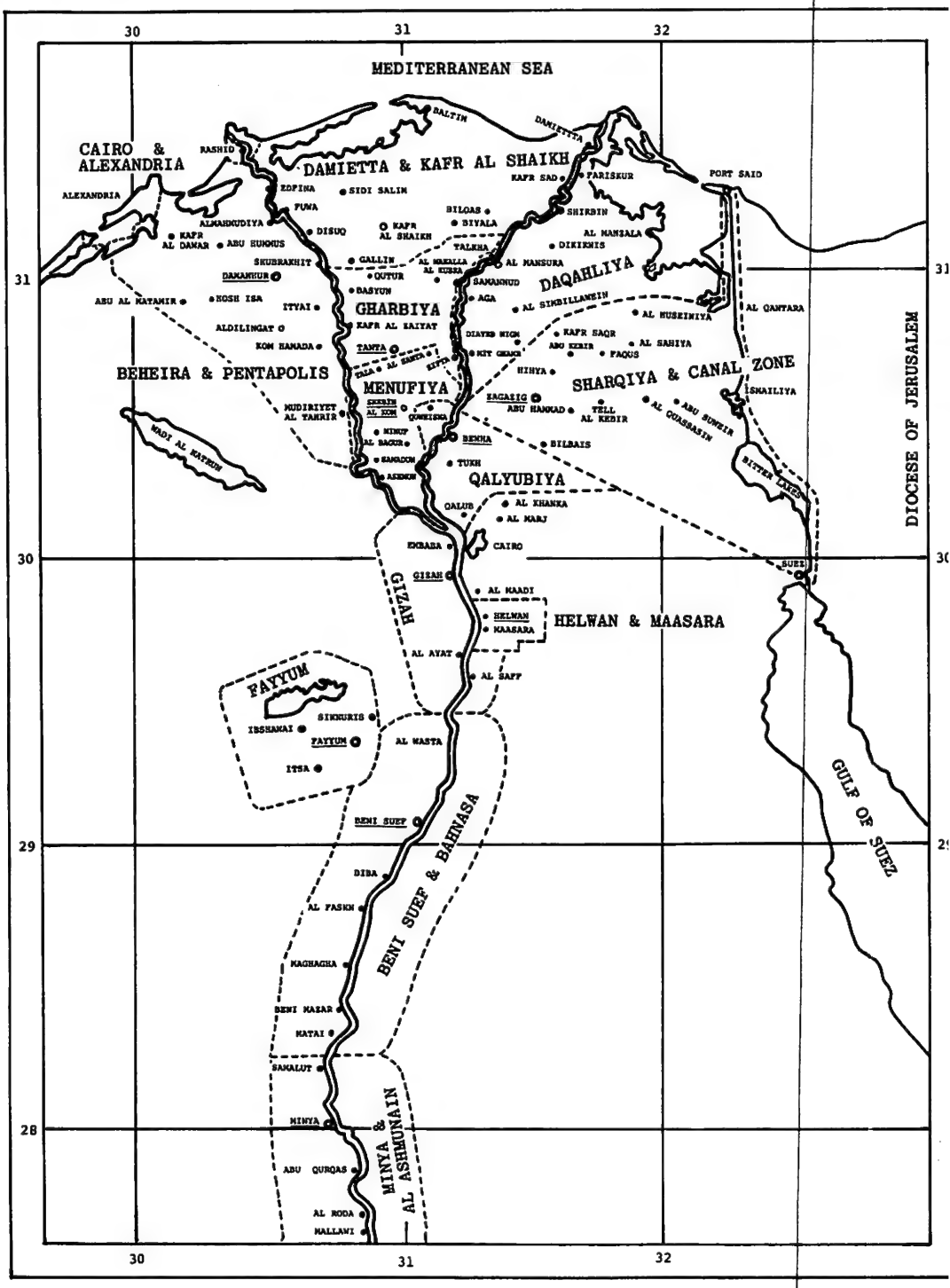
G. TUMARA
St. Catherine
Palm Grove
Mon. Garden of St.Catherine
FERAN RUINS
G.MUNEJA
wâdî Aleyât
wâdî Ajelah
GABAL
SERBAL

MAP VII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CAIRO & ALEXANDRIA
ALEXANDRIA
RASHID
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FARISKUR
PORT SAID
ZOFINA
SIDI SALIM
FUWA
ALMAHKUDIYA
KAFR AL DAWAR
ABU HUMMUS
DISUQ
KAFR AL SHAIKH
BILQAS
BIYALA
SHIRBIN
AL MANZALA
DIKIRNIS
TALKHA
GALLIN
SKUBRAKHIT
DAKAHLUR
QUTUR
AL MAHALLA AL KUBRA
AL MANSURA
SAMANNUD
DAQAHLIYA
BASYUN
AGA
AL SINBILLAWEIN
ABU AL MATAMIR
KOSH ISA
ITTAI
GHARBIYA
KAFR AL BATTAT
AL HUSEINIYA
AL QANTARA
ALDILINGAT
KOM HAMADA
TANTA
DIAYRB NIGM
KAFR SAQR
ABU KEBIR
FAQUS
AL SAHIYA
KIT GHAZI
BEHEIRA & PENTAPOLIS
SHARQIYA & CANAL ZONE
MENUFIYA
SHIBIN AL KOM
HIHYA
ISMAILIYA
MUDIRIYET AL TAHRIR
ZAGAZIG
ABU HAMMAD
TELL AL KEBIR
AL QUASSASIN
ABU SUWEIR
WADI AL NATRUN
QUESNA
BENHA
BILBAIS
MINUF
AL BAGUR
SANAGUN
TUKH
BITTER LAKES
AKRUN
QALYUBIYA
QALUB
AL KHANKA
AL MARJ
DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM
EMBABA
CAIRO
SUEZ
GIZAH
GIZAH
AL MAADI
HELWAN
MAASARA
HELWAN & MAASARA
AL AYAT
AL SAFF
FAYYUM
SINNURIS
IBSHANAI
FAYYUM
AL WASTA
ITSA
GULF OF SUEZ
BENI SUEF
BENI SUEF & BAHNASA
DIBA
AL FASHN
MAGHAGHA
BENI MAZAR
MATAI
SAMALUT
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AL RODA
MALLAWI
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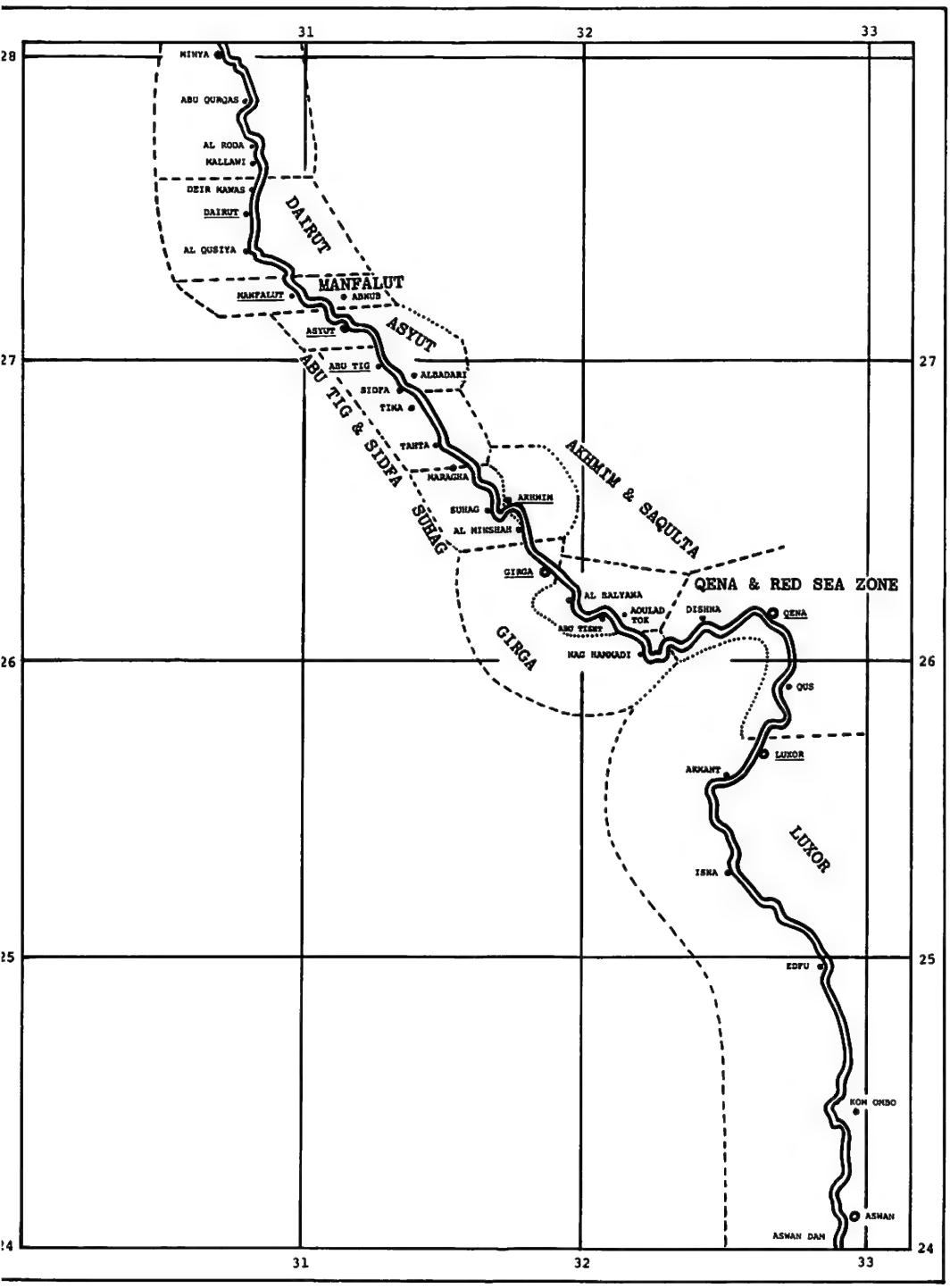
MAP VIII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AL QUSIYA
DAIRUT
MANFALUT
MANFALUT
ABNUB
ASYUT
ASYUT
ABU TIG
ALBADARI
SIDFA
TIMA
TAHTA
MARAGHA
ABU TIG & SIDFA
SUHAG
AKHMIM
SUHAG
AL MINSHAH
AKHMIM & SAQULTA
GIRGA
AL BALYANA
AOULAD TOK
DISHNA
QENA
QENA & RED SEA ZONE
ABU TIBBY
NAG HAMMADI
GIRGA
QUS
LUXOR
ARMANT
LUXOR
ISNA
EDFU
KOM OMBO
ASWAN
ASWAN DAM

CHAPTER I

CHRISTIANITY IN EGYPT – AN OUTLINE

The visitor who passes through Cairo and studies the folders of the manifold tours offered by the various sight-seeing agencies will notice that, apart from the excursions to the Pyramids and Saqqara (Pharaonic Egypt) and the trips to the Muhammad Alî Mosque and the Mosques of Sultan Hassan and Ibn Tûlûn (Islamic Egypt), a visit to the ancient Coptic Churches of Old Cairo is offered.

Nowadays, many visitors are exposed for the first time to Coptic Christianity, which represents one of the most ancient churches of Christendom. Those tourists who decide to take the tour to Old Cairo, in former times called Babylon, are singularly rewarded, for here they are confronted with some of the most ancient monuments of Christianity, going as far back as the fifth century. Here, for example, they discover the Church of St. Sergius which has been built upon the traditional site of the visit of the Holy Family to Babylon. To this day, thousands of pilgrims enter the grotto to offer prayers to Him Who came to bless the land of the Pharaohs. The flight of the Holy Family to Egypt is both a significant and a living tradition for the people of this land.

According to the Gospel of St. Matthew, the Holy Family fleeing from the wrath of Herod the Great sought refuge in Egypt, where, according to local tradition, they stayed for a

period of three years, until the death of Herod the King (4 B.C.). Many Copts believe that even prior to the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus Christ, Egyptians accepted the Divine Child as Lord over their lives. In fact, a wealth of stories and legends has been transmitted to us about the wonderous works wrought by the Christchild in the Delta and the Valley of the Nile.

FOUNDATION OF THE SEE OF ALEXANDRIA

Following the visit to the Land of the Pharaohs by the Infant Christ, St. Luke informs us that Egyptians were present on the Day of Pentecost, when at Jerusalem the Holy Spirit descended upon the faithful. There is good reason to believe that at least some of these Egyptians returned to their homes where they established Christian congregations. The Christians of Egypt are convinced that St. Mark the Evangelist visited Alexandria, where he preached the Gospel and founded the See of Alexandria. Moreover, it is generally believed that St. Mark received the crown of martyrdom in Alexandria. The apostolic foundation of the Coptic Church is significant, as to this day the head of the Coptic Church is called the Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of the See of St. Mark.

The history of the Coptic Church is both glorious and tragic. Glorious in the number of her illustrious sons such as St. Athanasius, St. Cyril, St. Antony and St. Pachomius, to mention but a few ; and tragic in the vast number of her children who in the various persecutions suffered martyrdom for their adherence to the Christian Faith. These are commemorated to this day by the Coptic Calendar in which the years are dated from the Year of the Martyrs (A.M.) which recalls the great persecution of the Christians which began in Egypt in 303 A.D. The Year or Era of the Martyrs commenced on the 29th of August, 284 A.D., the year in which Diocletian became emperor. Following the Diocletian persecution in Egypt from 303-311 A.D., Egyptian Christianity emerged victorious and dynamic, so much so that its theology and

christology were to leave a lasting impression upon the whole Church. Though there is no question that the Greek element in Egypt played an important role in this development, men like St. Antony and St. Pachomius were Egyptians who were hardly touched by the Greek atmosphere which permeated Alexandria.

THE DIDASCALIA

The outstanding contribution of Alexandrian Christianity to the Universal Church was the *Didascalia,* the famous Catechetical School, where Christian scholars laboured to prove that reason and revelation, philosophy and theology were not only compatible but also essential for each other's comprehension. The first great scholar who served as head of the *Didascalia* was Pantaenus. Although his exegetical contributions are lost, we can reconstruct some of his theological tenets by employing the testimony of his contemporaries. With regard to the dates of his life, we are again dependent on Clement his successor and on Origen. Authorities say that Pantaenus most probably came to Alexandria about the year 180 A.D. when he was appointed head of the School of Catechumens and remained there until he died shortly before 200 A.D. He was followed by Clement of Alexandria, the most illustrious pupil of Pantaenus, who was probably born of pagan parents about 150 A.D., and who died in Jerusalem around 220 A.D. Upon the death of Pantaenus, Clement became the head of the Catechetical School. When the severe persecutions of Septimius Severus compelled him to leave Egypt, he sought refuge in Cappadocia. Eusebius and St. Jerome provide lists of his writings. There is his trilogy consisting of the *Protrepticos* (A Hortatory Address to the Greek), the *Paedagogos* (the Tutor) in three books, and the *Stromateis* (Miscellanies) in eight books. In brief, the *Protrepticos* contains an attack on the crudities and immoralities in the stories told of the pagan gods. At the same time, Clement points out that the ancient Greeks recognized the spirituality of the Divine, which received further illumination through the message of the Hebrew Prophets. In the *Paedagogos* he sets forth how even prior to

His Incarnation, Christ pointed to the Truth. The *Stromateis* include various subjects, such as chronology, philosophy and poetry. Similar to the views of some gnostics, Clement maintained that religious knowledge or illumination was the essence of Christian perfection, and like Socrates he considered ignorance the worst sin. The small essay *Quis dives salvetur ?* is an admirable exposition of *St. Mark* X: 17-31. Here he argues that wealth, if responsibly used, is not unchristian. Among the books which are lost, there are such volumes as the *Hypotyposes* or Adumbrations, as well as the treatises on The Passover, Fasting, Slander, Patience and On the Rule of the Church for those who judaize. The theology of Clement of Alexandria can be systematically arranged under such headings as the Trinitarian Apophasis, the Doctrine of the Logos, Christology, Ecclesiology, Baptism, Creation and the Fall, Penance, the Eucharist, Holy Matrimony and Virginity.

The most important theologian and extensive author was Origen, whose life can be divided into five sections: His youth, his scientific and religious activities, his travels, his stay at Caesarea in Palestine and his sufferings and death. Born of Christian parents in 185 A.D., Origen joined the Catechetical School at an early age where he listened to the lectures of Pantaenus and Clement. Intensely ascetic by nature, he observed the most rigorous vigils. Four oboli a day earned by copying manuscripts sufficed for his bodily sustenance. A rash decision led him to apply the evangelical injunction of *St. Matthew* XIX : 12 to himself. For twenty-eight years, from 204-232 A.D., Origen worked in Alexandria. It was during this time that he travelled to Rome, Arabia, Antioch and Palestine. In Palestine the bishops invited him to deliver public lectures in the churches. Moreover, it was here that he was ordained presbyter, an act which Demetrius of Alexandria interpreted as an infringement of his own right. Demetrius convened two synods ; the first gathering resolved to banish Origen from Alexandria, the second determined that he was to be deprived of his ordination. In 232 A.D., after having settled in Caesarea, Origen established a flourishing school, and some of his pupils like Gregory Thaumaturgus, Bishop of Neocaesarea, rose to important positions in the hierarchy.

Origen continued to travel to Cappadocia, Nicomedia, Athens and Arabia. During the Decian persecution he suffered maltreatment, and though he survived these troubles, he died at Tyre in 253. Among his exegetical and theological writings, there is the *Hexapla,* in which he placed the Hebrew text side by side with the various Greek versions. Then there are the exegetical works, which are divided into the *scholia*, the homilies and the commentaries. The principal apologetic work is his book *Against Celsus,* a 2nd century pagan philosopher. This work, written in Caesarea, has been completely preserved.

Of his dogmatic writings, we possess only one in its integrity, namely *De Principiis* in the translation by Rufinus. The ten books of *Stromata* have perished except for some fragments. Among the works in the field of practical theology, there is the treatise « On Prayer » and a *Protreptikos* composed at the time of the persecution of Maximinus in 235 A.D.

Origen was succeeded as head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria by Heracles, his former pupil and assisant. Little is known about him. After the death of Demetrius, Heracles succeeded him on the throne of St. Mark in Alexandria. The successor of Heracles as head of the *Didascalia* was another famous pupil of Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, later surnamed the Great. In 231 A.D. he was head of the Catechetical School, and in 248 A.D. he became bishop of Alexandria. During the Decian persecution he fled to the Libyan desert, under Valerian he was banished to Cephro. Faced with the problem of the apostates, Dionysius readmitted them and prohibited the rebaptism of penitent heretics. Among his writings are his works « On Nature, » « Refutation and Defence, » and his correspondence with Novatianus, Basilides and Fabius.

According to tradition, Dionysius was succeeded as head of the *Didascalia* by Theognostus, who administered the School from 265-282 A.D., and wrote the *Hypotyposes.* Little is known about him beyond the testimony of Photius. He was

followed by Prierus, Achillas and Peter of Alexandria before he was elected to the throne of St. Mark about 300 A.D.

THE CANON OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

Egypt's role in the formation of the Canon of Holy Scriptures was of utmost importance, owing to the natural advantages of its position and the conspicuous eminence of its great teachers during the 3rd century (Clement of Alexandria and Origen). The testimony of the Alexandrian Church to the New Testament Canon is generally uniform. In addition to the acknowledged books, the *Ep. to the Hebrews* and the *Apocalypse* were received there as Divine Scripture even by those who doubted their immediate Apostolic origin. The two shorter *Epistles of St. John* were well known and commonly received, but no one, except Origen, so far as can be discovered, was acquainted with the *Second Epistle of Peter.*

Of Coptic versions, the Memphitic text did not include the *Apocalypse,* and it appears that it was not included in the Thebaic Canon (356 A.D.).

Athanasius in one of his Festal Letters has given us a list of the books of the New Testament, the fountains of salvation, exactly agreeing with our Canon. In addition to these, he notices other books, and among them the *Teaching of the Apostles* and the *Pastor Hermes,* as useful for young converts, though they were not included in the Canon.

THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES

During the 4th and 5th century, theological and christological controversies dominated the course of the history of the Egyptian Church. The significance of the Arian controversy with regard to its inner-Egyptian importance is seen by the roles of Meletius, the Arian Bishop of Lycopolis, and that of St. Athanasius, who emerged from the Arian controversy not merely as the orthodox patriarch of the Church of Alexandria, but also as the universally accepted and revered doctor of the Catholic Church. Alexandria's leading position with-

in the Church was further strengthened by its contribution of monasticism. Its dynamic impression upon the Church ceases, however, during the second half of the 5th century. Whereas St. Antony and St. Pachomius were ascetes of universal significance, St. Shenute's impact was largely limited to Egypt, and even more so to Upper Egypt.

The Chalcedonian controversy, with Cyril I and Dioscorus I as the two principal personalities from the monophysitic point of view, eventually led to the tragic schism which alienated the Church of Egypt from both the Byzantine and Latin Churches. According to Leipoldt and Maspero, Egyptian national sentiment — a non-theological factor — may well have been an important issue in the unfortunate division of the Body of Christ. The post-Chalcedonian developments, *i.e.* the struggle for supremacy (dyophysite or monophysite) in Alexandria, the irenic attempt of Zeno to settle with the *Henoticon* the theological estrangement by omitting the word « nature » from the *Instrument of Union,* only led to additional schisms. At any rate, by the 5th century, the Church was divided into Dyophysites, Monophysites, Arians and Nestorians.

By the beginning of the sixth century, several inner monophysitic divisions emerged, and thus weakened even further the witness of the Coptic, i.e. Egyptian Church. Moreover, the leadership within Monophysitism passed to the Syrian Church which for the following centuries determined the theological thinking of the Monophysites.

THE ARAB CONQUEST OF EGYPT

The Arab Conquest under 'Amr ibn al-'As (639 A.D.) introduced a radically different situation for the Copts, and though at first the Arabs displayed an appreciable amount of tolerance, soon increasing numbers of Christians accepted the new religion. The role of Benjamin I, the 38th Patriarch of Alexandria, is in this connection a rather significant one. For not only was he the first patriarch who embodied the isolation and self-sufficiency of the Coptic Church, it occur-

red also during his patriarchate that Islam penetrated into the Nile Valley. By the beginning of the 8th century, Arabic became the official language, and the first Arabic document of the Nile Valley was dated from 709 A.D.

One of the most serious consequences of the Arab Conquest was the increasing taxation of the Copts by their Muslim rulers. While there were occasional destructions of churches, the religious life as such suffered relatively little. Indeed, it is significant that the *Coptic Synaxarium* records considerably fewer martyrs for the Islamic period than for the Pre-Nicene era. Still, Islamic pressure evoked Coptic resentment, which expressed itself in at least six Coptic insurrections between 725-726 A.D. and 773 A.D. The political failure of these revolutions only increased the prestige of the conquerors, so that from that time on, even more Copts accepted the faith of Islâm. At any rate, by the 9th century, the Muslims had gained the majority in Egypt, and parallel to the decrease of the numbers of Christians was the decline of the number of dioceses.

The financial pressure exerted upon the Copts, the confiscation of ecclesiastical treasures, and the temporary imprisonments of members of the hierarchy were largely responsible for the introduction of the *cheirotonia,* the payment of sums of money for an ecclesiastical position.

During the reign of the Tulunids (868-905 A.D.), the Ikhshidids (935-960 A.D.) and the Fatimids (969-1171), the Copts experienced a general attitude of toleration, which, however, was unfortunately interrupted by the violent persecutions of al-Hâkim, the mad-man. Thus during the years 1012-1015, many churches and monasteries were destroyed, Christians were persecuted, and Christian public servants were expelled from their Government offices. Al-Zâhir, al-Hâkim's successor, however, permitted those who were forced to accept Islâm to return to their original faith.

The patriarchate of Christodoulus (1047-1078) constituted one of the significant periods in the history of the Coptic Church. During this period, the Coptic patriarchate was

moved from Alexandria to Cairo, a transfer which on the one hand symbolized a certain accommodation to the Fatimid rulers, while on the other hand it isolated the Coptic Church even more from the other Oriental Churches. The sympathetic attitude of the Fatimids towards the Copts, which expressed itself in their participation in Christian feasts and the unprejudiced employment of Copts in the Government, was largely due to the Ismailitic nature of their faith, which the Egyptian Muslims never accepted.

With the invasion of Egypt by Shîrkûh, the Fatimid rule ends and the Ayyûbid dynasty comes to power (1171-1250). And although this period is not marked by major persecutions and violence, none of the Ayyûbids shared any particular sympathetic feelings for the Copts. Whereas the Crusaders had challenged the supremacy of Islâm, the Copts as well as the other Oriental Christians had accepted their minority position, and thus, they had little choice but to play the role of the loyal Christian subject. During the 13th century, there is a brief Christian Arabic renaissance in the fields of theology, apologetics, ecclesiastical history and canon-law, yet its impact upon the Church was hardly noticeable, and Christianity in Egypt rapidly declined under the new rulers, the Mamlûks (1250), who had little, or better, no understanding and sympathy for the Christians. Between 1279 and 1447, the Mamlûks attempted altogether eight times to expel all Coptic civil servants from Government posts. By the 14th century, the number of Copts in Egypt had significantly decreased. Moreover, Coptic history, i.e. recorded history, comes to an end with the 13th-14th century. This means that for the centuries between the 14th and the 19th century we are dependent largely upon the reports of occasional references by Muslim authors or the observations by the Western pilgrims and travellers.

The impression which one receives during this period from the study of the history of the monasteries, which no doubt reflects in some measure the general conditions of the Church, is that the Coptic Church declined sadly, and that it had lost almost all of its former spiritual vitality. This

spiritual paucity is also reflected by the almost complete absence of theological creativity from the 13th to the 20th century. True, there were no longer any serious persecutions and devastations of Coptic properties, and the Church as a whole was tolerated, yet the *Jizya* (poll-tax) was collected from the Copts until 1815.

It is interesting to notice that neither the French nor the British succeeded in winning the cooperation of the Copts as a group for their respective policies. Though individual Copts, just as well as Muslims, identified themselves with the interests of the Occidentals, the Coptic Church as such remained aloof, and continued its conservative adherence to the traditions of a more glorious past. This aloofness of the Copts, especially during the French expedition, may have been one reason for the ready acceptance of many Copts into the civil service by Muhammad 'Alî.

Important in the history of the Copts was the patriarchate of Cyril IV, the Reformer (1854-1861), under whose enlightened leadership, the Copts gained a new sense of ecclesiastical prestige and position. As educator, statesman and reformer, Cyril IV left a profound impression upon the Church.

The latter part of the 19th century as well as the first half of the 20th century were characterized by intense struggles between the various patriarchs and the *maglis al-milli*, the community council, centering mainly upon the issue of the responsibilities of the administration of the ecclesiastical and monastic *waqfs* (religious endowments). A new era of enlightenment and increased personal and corporate spirituality was ushered in with the enthronment of Cyril VI, the former Abûnâ Mînâ al-Mutawahhid al-Barâmûsî, in 1959. The accomplishments of Cyril VI were many, especially if one considers that he not only inherited what seemed insurmountable problems, but also reigned during one of the most critical periods of the recently established independent Arab Republic of Egypt. In the early years of his patriarchate he devoted much of his time to the consolidation of Coptic monasticism, aware of the importance of the Coptic monasteries in the life of Egyptian Christianity. Thus, for example, he ordered all

itinerant monks and hermits to return to their monasteries of origin. Few months after his enthronment, he laid the foundation stone for the construction of the ninth Coptic monastery, the Monastery of St. Menas, on the historic site of Maryût (Mareotis). Recognizing that some of the most competent and progressive spiritual leaders were among the monks of the Monastery of the Syrians in the Wâdî al-Natrûn, he selected several of them for the episcopacy.

It occurred during the patriarchate of Cyril VI that the Coptic Church entered the œcumenical dialogue on numerous levels. Already in 1954, at the occasion of the Second General Conference of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, Illinois, the Coptic Church was officially represented. After 1962, however, the intensity of œcumenical participation increased, largely due to the consecration of Bishop Samuel, who was placed in charge of œcumenical relations of the Coptic Church, representing the Church on numerous boards and committees of the World Council of Churches. Conferences with the other non-Chalcedonian Churches of the East in Addis Ababa and Cairo strengthened the witness of these ancient communions in the contemporary world. The Coptic Church sent Bishop Shenute (the present Pope and Patriarch) to attend the millenial celebrations of the monastic community on Mount Athos; other bishops entered into discussions with representatives of the Byzantine churches and engaged repeatedly in theological discourses with leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, one of the major accomplishments of Cyril VI was the negotiation leading to the translation of the relics of St. Mark the Evangelist from Venice to Cairo in June 1968. The sixties of this century will be remembered for an active program of building churches, crowned by the construction and inauguration of the new Cathedral of St. Mark in Cairo, an occasion which brought together representatives of most Christian communions throughout the world. In terms of social and economic reconstruction, the endeavours of the Rural and Urban Diakonia were milestones in offering relevant Christian service to the needy and the alienated. Looking back over the last twelve years, the patriarchate of Cyril VI left a lasting impression

on the life of the Church of Egypt. Throughout the critical days of the Six Days' War in June 1967, the Coptic Church identified herself with the national aspirations of the people, calling upon her sons and daughters to withstand the threats by the enemy. On March 8, 1971, Cyril VI, one of the truly great patriarchs of the Apostolic See of Alexandria, died of a heart-attack at the age of 69.

During the interim period, Bishop Antonius of Sohâg served as *locum tenens,* until on Sunday, October 31, 1971, the new Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa, the 117th Successor of St. Mark, was elected by the altar-lot. Altogether 622 electors (28 metropolitans and bishops, 19 abbots and secretaries of monasteries, 5 members of the Council of the Clergy, 11 members of the Council of the Laity, 31 priests, 11 ministers, 47 former members of the *maglis al-milli,* 72 Copts of Cairo, 24 Copts of Alexandria, 140 representatives of the dioceses, 12 representatives of each of the twenty-one governorates and 22 journalists; also, for the first time, the Church of Ethiopia was represented by 40 electors) participated in the election proceedings. The three candidates who received the highest number of votes were Bishop Samuel (440), Bishop Shenute (433) and Qummus Timutâûs al-Maqârî (306). Under the supervision of Dr. Kamal Ramzi Stino and Engineer Ibrâhîm Nagîb, the names of these three candidates were placed in a silver case, which for the past three hundred years had been used to keep the Holy Chrism. On the appointed day of the drawing of the altar-lot, many distinguished members of Church and State attended the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. In addition to Dr. Stino and Engineer Nagîb, the Minister of Tourism and President of the Coptic *waqfs,* there were present H.E. Malas Andom, the Ethiopian ambassador and doyen of the diplomatic corps, the foreign diplomats accredited in Cairo, as well as the metropolitans and bishops of the Coptic Church and a delegation of the Church of Ethiopia, led by Archbishop Luke of the diocese of Arussi (Asella), and representatives of both Catholic and Protestant churches. At the beginning of the Divine Liturgy the names of the three candidates, which since the preceding Friday were kept in the silver case on the altar,

were publicly announced. The deacons had assembled ten young boys, who attended the celebration and who later received the Holy Sacrament. The smallest of these boys, Ayman Munir Kamal, was chosen by Bishop Antonius to select one of the three papers from the silver case. One paper was submitted to the *locum tenens* ; the name of the 117th Successor of St. Mark was proclaimed. Bishop Shenute !

Shenute III — his family name being Nazir Gayed Raphael — was born on August 3, 1923. In 1947 he received his B.A. in history from Cairo University, and two years later his diploma in theology. As a reserve officer he participated in the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948. In 1950 he began to work in the Sunday School Movement of the Coptic Church. Three years later he occupied the chair of theology in the Theological Seminary in Helwân. On July 18, 1954 he joined the monastic community of the Dair al-Surîân in the Wâdî al-Natrûn, where he was placed in charge of the library. As Abûnâ Antûnîûs al-Surîanî he excelled in spirituality and asceticism. For several years he lived as a hermit in the desert of the Wâdî al-Natrûn and the Wâdî al-Fâregh. He left the Wâdî al-Natrûn to resume the ascetic life in the Monastery of St. Samuel in the desert of al-Qalamûn, south of the Fayyûm Oasis. In 1957, however, he returned to the Dair al-Surîân to pursue both his ascetic and scholarly life in the Wâdî al-Natrûn, for the most part inhabiting a cave some seventeen km. west of the Monastery of St. Bishoi. In September 1962 Cyril VI consecrated him Bishop of Higher Theological Studies with the name of Bishop Shenute. Throughout his monastic life, he continued his interest in the Sunday School Movement. He is the author of several books and a large number of articles on spirituality and theology. In 1966 he was elected president of the Association of Theological Institutions of the Near East. Being one of the foremost theologians of the Coptic Church, he has represented her on international conferences and congresses. For several years he has preached to thousands of people every Friday night, at first in the assembly hall of Anbâ Ruwais Building, later in the new Cathedral of St. Mark. Pope Shenute III combines the rare qualities of being a shepherd, an evange-

list, an ascetic and an administrator. There is no question that a new era of the ancient See of St. Mark has been inaugurated with the election of Shenute III.

MONASTICISM

In order to understand and feel one's way into the Church it is vital to understand the life lived in the Coptic desert monasteries, because, as in the old days, the Coptic leadership, the patriarch, the metropolitans and the bishops are recruited from the desert monks. Thus it is no oversimplification to say that the state of the monasteries reflects in some measure the state of the Church.

To Egypt the Christian Church is heavily indebted for the creation of an institution which from its very beginnings profoundly influenced her organization and philosophy. Indeed, within a few years of the foundation of monasticism, Egypt became justly famed throughout the Ancient World for the number of her monasteries and the saintly lives of her hermits and monks. Though St. Paul the Theban, who died about 341 A.D. must, strictly speaking, be considered the first Christian hermit, St. Antony, who was his junior by some twenty years, was the real originator of the monastic life.

It must not be thought that, in fleeing from the world and taking up their abode in caves in the desert, the hermits did this out of any disgust with the world. The solitude and quietness of the Egyptian desert helped them to live the life of contemplation. The spread of Coptic monasticism was amazingly rapid, and within a few years of its inception, monasteries began to spring up throughout the length and breadth of Egypt. There were, however, certain great centres of monasticism, for example, in the north, that is in the desert of Scetis or the Wâdî al-Natrûn, where monasteries were founded by such famous monks as St. Macarius, St. Bishoi and St. John the Short. In the east, there were two famous monasteries, the one founded by St. Paul the Theban and the other by St. Antony, both of which are still in existence. In general, it may be said, that the Coptic monasteries

preserve the original features of monasticism, that is to say, it is the duty of the monks to perform daily the Divine Office, to fast, to practise chastity and penance, and to live as much as possible like angels. In fact, their life is called « the angelic life ». It follows, therefore, that they do not engage in any teaching or learned studies, in parochial work, or in any of those activities which are generally associated with Western monasticism. In Europe, the nearest comparison to Coptic monasticism is the monastic life observed by the Carthusian monks.

In 1971, there were about 350 Coptic monks living in the following nine Coptic monasteries :

The Monastery of the Syrians (Dair al-Surîân), Wâdî al-Natrûn, 35 monks under Bishop Theophilus.

The Monastery of St. Bishoi (Dair Anbâ Bishoî), Wâdî al-Natrûn, 10 monks under Bishop Theophilus.

The Monastery of the Romans (Dair al-Barâmûs), Wâdî al-Natrûn, 46 monks under Qummus Faltas al-Baramûsî.

The Monastery of St. Macarius (Dair Abû Maqâr), Wâdî al-Natrûn, 29 monks under Metropolitan Michael.

The Monastery of St. Menas (Dair Abû Mînâ), Maryût, 8 monks under Qummus Mînâ Abû Mînâ.

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin (Dair al-Muharraq), near Asyût, 85 monks under Qummus Quzmân al-Muharraqî.

The Monastery of St. Antony (Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs), Red Sea, 74 monks under Qummus Athanâsius al-Antûnî.

The Monastery of St. Paul (Dair Anbâ Bûlâ), Red Sea, 46 monks under Bishop Arsenius.

The Monastery of St. Samuel (Dair Anbâ Samwîl), al-Qalamûn, 12 monks under Qummus Mînâ al-Samwîlî.

To the Copts, who are members of an Apostolic Church, the monastic and ascetic life has always been considered as spiritually and morally superior to that lived in the world. The monks, who are frequently referred to as « the Angels of God, » are regarded, therefore, with the greatest admiration and respect.

CHURCH SERVICES

With regard to the church services in the Coptic Church one should remember that the liturgical language of the Church is Coptic, which, however, is being replaced more and more by Arabic. As in the Greek Orthodox Church, instrumental music is not allowed as an accompaniment to chants and hymns ; however, certain of these are accompanied by the clashing of cymbals and the striking of metal triangles. The church services on Sundays and Feast Days are the Evening Offering of Incense, preceded by the recitation of None, Vespers and Compline, and the Morning Offering of Incense, preceded by Matins and Prime and followed by Terce Sext and the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy usually begins around 9 a.m. in the winter, and 8.30 a.m. in the summer. Leaven bread, freshly baked, is used for the Holy Eucharist, and the Holy Communion is administered under both kinds, the Holy Body being placed in the communicant's mouth, and the Precious Blood being offered by means of a spoon. The communicant is required to fast before receiving the Holy Communion, and he should have confessed his sins to a priest.

The Coptic Church recognizes seven Holy Orders, namely Reader, Sub-deacon, Deacon, Archdeacon, Priest, Hegoumenos (Archpriest) and Bishop. Candidates for ordination to the parish-priesthood must be married men, since marriage is forbidden after ordination. If the candidate wishes to remain celibate, he must first become a monk and then seek ordination.

As regards the dogmas and sacraments of the Coptic Church, these are nearly identical with those of the other Orthodox Churches, save for the dogma concerning the Nature of Christ. The Copts are Monophysites and believe, in the words of Dioscorus, that « the Lord Christ is One Christ, One Lord, One Nature and One Will ». In 451 A.D., the Oecumenical Council at Chalcedon condemned this dogma, which in turn produced a complete break with the Greek and Latin Churches.

THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Apart from the Copts, however, other Christian communities have established themselves in Egypt over the years. The disagreements at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. produced a double Patriarchate in Alexandria, on the one hand the Byzantine or Greek Orthodox Patriarch, on the other hand the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate. The present Byzantine Patriarch, His Most Divine Beatitude, Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria, All Egypt, All Africa, the Thirteenth Apostle and Judge of the Universe, is Nicholas VI the 113th Byzantine successor of St. Mark. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate comprises 55 churches in Egypt. Due to the recent departure of many Greeks, several of their churches have been closed.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Alexandria lists 17 churches, the Patriarchal Epitropeia of Cairo 14 churches, the Metropolitan See of Leontopolis (Ismailia) 6 churches, the Metropolitan See of Pelusium (Port Said) 6 churches and the Metropolitan See of Hermopolis (Tanta) 8 churches.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The history of the Catholic community in Egypt actually goes back to the 13th century, when St. Francis of Assisi presented himself in 1219 to the Sultan of Egypt.

From the 15th to the 17th century, several attempts were made to unite the Coptic Church with the See of Rome. On July 7, 1439, Pope Eugenius IV (1431-1447) addressed a letter to John XI, Patriarch of Alexandria (1427-1452), inviting the Copts to attend the Oecumenical Council of Florence with a view to unite the See of Alexandria with the See of Rome. John XI sent Andrew, Hegoumenos of the Monastery of St. Antony, to Florence as an observer. The practical result of the Council was that the schism remained.

For about one hundred years, there were no official contacts between the See of Rome and the See of Alexandria.

Gabriel VII (1525-1568) received two emissaries of Pope Pius IV (1559-1565), though their mission was without obvious success.

The structure of Catholicism in Egypt is very composite, for in Egypt the Catholics are divided into seven different rites. Egypt is the only country in which seven rites coexist, and in this, Egypt surpasses Paris, New York and even Rome. Each of these rites follows its own special liturgy, sharing it with its own community, and possessing its own hierarchy. From a canonical point of view, this leads to a multiple jurisdiction. The Latin rite has three vicars apostolic, the Chaldaean Catholics are governed by a patriarchal vicar and the Syrian Catholics have a bishop. The Armenian Catholics have one bishop. The Maronites, who are chiefly of Lebanese origin, also have one bishop. The Greek Catholics or Melkites are governed by the Patriarch of Antioch who is also Patriarch of Alexandria. The Coptic Catholics have a patriarch, five bishops and a national seminary.

The influence of the Catholic Church is constantly growing in spite of nationalistic and traditionalistic obstacles and difficulties.

THE ANGLICAN AND PROTESTANT CHURCHES

The first Protestant missionary to Egypt was Peter Heyling, the son of a goldsmith of the Hanseatic City of Lübeck. Born in 1607, he studied in Paris where he met with Hugo Grotius and Hieronymus von Dorne. Thése Lutheran laymen aimed at a rejuvenation of the ancient Eastern Orthodox Churches, and whereas von Dorne sailed for Constantinople, Heyling arrived in Alexandria in the spring of 1633. For several months he stayed in the Monastery of St. Macarius, later in the Monastery of the Syrians in the Wâdî al-Natrûn for the purpose of converting the desert fathers to his own faith. In October 1634 he left for Ethiopia. In the 18th century the Moravians became interested in working among the Orthodox Churches in the East. It was Count von Zinzendorf who was primarily responsible for the decision to send

Friedrich Wilhelm Hooker to Egypt. Dr. Hooker became the first of eight missionaries of the Moravian Church, whose labours extended in Egypt from 1752 to 1783.

Protestant efforts of a more continuous nature began in the 19th century by the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England. The operations of the C. M. S. in Egypt date back to the year 1815, when the Rev. W. Jowett visited Egypt to confer with the Patriarch as to the means by which the Society could render its aid to the Copts. Thereupon, five missionaries, including Gobat (who was afterwards Bishop of Jerusalem), Lieder, Müller, Kruse and Kugler were sent to Egypt. In 1862, however, the work of the C. M. S. had gradually died down, and it was not until 1882, that the Society was determined to start a second Egypt Mission, the special purpose of which was the evangelization of the Muslims. The practical outcome of the work of the C. M. S. was the establishment of an indigenous Episcopal Church.

The largest Protestant Church in Egypt is the Coptic Evangelical Church, which is the product of the missionary efforts of the United Presbyterian Church of the United States of America. The first American missionaries came to Egypt in 1854, and the first presbytery was organized in 1860. The last hundred years have seen an unprecedented growth of this evangelical movement in both the Delta and Valley of the Nile, so that to-day, there are eight presbyteries, namely, Delta, Middle Egypt, Minya, Mallawî, Asyût, Sohâg, Thebes and Sudan. Furthermore, there are numerous Protestant fellowships and missions which were established in the latter part of the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century.

For the European and American residents in Egypt, there are several Protestant Churches, which conduct worship services in English, French and German. The Eglise Evangélique du Caire serves the French-speaking Protestants and is both international and interdenominational in character. The German Evangelical Church, situated at 32-34 Sharia al-Galaa in the district of Bulaq, is associated with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID). This church, which was

founded in 1864, has served ever since both Lutheran and Reformed Christians. St. Andrews's United Church of Cairo has served since the Suez War in 1956 more Americans than Englishmen. At one time an overseas church of the Church of Scotland, it was associated with the United Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. before becoming an independent Overseas Union Church. The Church is situated in the immediate vicinity of the German and the Swiss church in the middle of Cairo.

The Cathedral of All Saints (Egyptian Episcopal) serves those English speaking foreigners who belong to the Anglican or Episcopal communions. Regular services in English are conducted by an Anglican provost. The cathedral church was situated on the Corniche al-Nil near the Hilton Hotel, and is being transferred to the Island of Gezirah, near the Omar Khayyam Hotel.

About 15 kms. south of Cairo is the residential suburb of Ma'adi. The Ma'adi Community Church is a Christian fellowship which is associated with the Department of Overseas Union Churches of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the members represent numerous different nationalities and denominations.

CHAPTER II

THE INFLUENCE OF THE COPTIC CHURCH UPON THE WORLD CHURCH

The outstanding contribution of the Egyptian Church to the World Church was the monastic movement, which received its impetus from men like SS. Antony, Paul, Macarius and others. St. Antony's name became known and associated with a new way of life leading to salvation. His disciple, St. Macarius who stayed with St. Antony at least twice, established Antonian monasticism in the Desert of Scetis, where several thousand monks imitated and even surpassed the rigour and austerity of their founder. St. Amon, the father of Nitrian monasticism, had been inspired by St. Antony just as St. Isaac and St. Pelusian had upheld the Antonian tradition at Mount Clysma. St. Hilarion, the originator of Palestinian monasticism, derived his ascetic enthusiasm from the Great Hermit. Born in 291 A.D., in the vicinity of Gaza, he had made a pilgrimage to the south Qalâlah mountain-range for the purpose of learning from St. Antony the angelic life. After staying two months with him, he could no longer endure the crowds that came to visit the hermit. On his return to his native land, St. Hilarion lived in a tiny cell near Gaza, which he made his abode for fifty years. Within a few years of his death, laurae and monasteries were to be found in all parts of Palestine.

Johannes Cassianus (360-435 A.D.) visited the East with his friend Germanus. At Bethlehem he entered a monastery,

but his desire to visit the Egyptian hermits of the Desert of Scetis inspired him to leave Palestine. For seven years he lived with the Egyptian Fathers of the Desert. Afterwards he went to Constantinople, where he became a pupil of St. John Chrysostom.

At Marseille, Cassianus founded a monastery where the Egyptian rule was followed. Nearby, St. Honoratus founded in 400 A.D. the Monastery of Lerinum (Lerins), where until the introduction of the Benedictine Rule in the seventh century, the Egyptian system was followed.

One of the leaders of Christian monasticism in Mesopotamia was St. Eugenius, an Egyptian pearl-fisher, who had worked at Clysma. Following his call to the ascetic life, he entered a monastery. Then he chose a number of Egyptian monks to go with him to Mesopotamia to build a monastery near Nisibis. He died about 363 A.D.

Soon after St. Antony's death, people from all over the Levant came to Egypt to see and to learn about monasticism of which they had heard so much. St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantina or Salamis in Cyprus, visited Egypt and after his return to Palestine became hegoumenos of a monastery which he founded near Eleutheropolis in Judaea. St. Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea and founder of many monastic institutions in Asia Minor, derived his knowledge of monasticism from the monks and hermits of Syria and Egypt, whom he visited.

Monasticism like Christianity was introduced into Ethiopia from Egypt. In 480 A.D., St. Aragawi, who is said to have received his habit from St. Pachomius, founded the celebrated monastery at Debra Damo. With him came eight other monks from the Monastery of St. Antony and together they are known in the Ethiopian Church as the « Nine Saints ».

In 385 A.D., St. Hieronymus (Jerome) travelled in company with two Roman ladies, St. Paula and her daughter Eustochium, to Palestine. From the Holy Land, St. Jerome and his companions continued their journey to Egypt, where

they visited the monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn. After their return to Palestine they settled at Bethlehem, where St. Paula founded four monasteries, three for nuns and one for monks. It was the latter monastery over which St. Jerome presided and where he was engaged in most of his literary work.

The part played by early Egyptian monasticism in the conversion of England is a matter that has still to be determined. « It is more than probable », writes Stanley Lane-Poole, « that we are indebted to the remote hermits for the first preaching of the Gospel in England, where, till the coming of St. Augustine, the Egyptian monastic rule prevailed. But more important is the belief that Irish Christianity, the great civilizing agent of the early Middle Ages among the northern nations, was the child of the Egyptian Church ».

The Irish Stowe Missal, which is the oldest missal of the Irish Church, refers to the Egyptian anchorites of the 4th century. The text, which is in four columns, and consists mostly of single words, reads in the second column of fol. 32 v° as follows : *Pauli, Antoni, et ceterorum patrum heremi sciti.*

There is no question that the Church of Egypt and the Church of Ireland had rather intimate relations with each other. The Irish monk and geographer Dicuil (825 A.D.) referred in his *De mensura orbis terrae* to Egypt. Warren speaks of seven Coptic monks who were buried at Disert Ulidh in Ulster, and we find their names invoked in the Litany attributed to St. Oengus.

Celtic and Irish monks as well as St. Antony have been frequently portrayed with little bells. Portable clochettes, whether of iron or bronze, have played an important role in Celtic countries, Ireland, Scotland and Gaul. It seems likely that, with the increase of St. Antony's popularity in the Western world, religious art bestowed upon him the same insignia with which the Irish monks were represented.

The city-seal of Uznach in Switzerland shows St. Antony with staff and clochettes in prayer, whilst the seal of the

Gemeinderat St. Antoni/Fbg. has the Coptic Tau-cross with two clochettes.

Furthermore, in the *Vita Bonifatii* attributed to Radbodo, Bishop of Utrecht (9th century), we discover a significant reference to the very illustrious company of anchorites and monks in Egypt.

Apart from the direct influence of Egyptian monasticism upon European Christianity it might be well to mention only briefly some of the Egyptian Saints who are given special veneration in Europe. St. Warina of Garagos (Upper Egypt) had followed St. Maurice to Switzerland where she suffered martyrdom during the Diocletian persecution. Her relics are venerated at Zurzach in Aargau. St. Victor (Buqtur) is venerated in Geneva, where his relics were taken at the end of the fifth century, and SS. Felix and Regula, who are commemorated on September 11, also belonged to the Egyptian Legion of the Thebaid. The two Saints suffered martyrdom and are the object of veneration at Zürich.

Lit. : Burmester, O.H.E. Khs-, *A Guide to the Monasteries of the Wâdî 'n-Natrûn*. Cairo, 1954.

Evelyn White, H.G., *The Monasteries of the Wâdî'n-Natrûn*. 3 vols., New York, 1926-33.

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CHAPTER III

THE RELICS OF ST. MARK

The recent translations of several holy relics as inaugurated by the See of Rome have renewed the attention of churchmen and historians to long forgotten traditions pertaining to these relics. With genuine gratitude and jubilation Christians of the Eastern Churches have welcomed the return of the relics of their patrons. Thus, on September 26, 1964, some twenty-one metropolitans of the Greek Orthodox Church could receive the head of St. Andrew which now reposes in the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Patras. Thirteen months later, on October 24, 1965, Cardinal Giovanni Urbani, the Patriarch of Venice, handed to the Greek Orthodox delegation from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem the relics of St. Sabas. After being exposed for veneration in the Church of the Resurrection, St. Sabas was translated to the Desert Monastery in the Wâdî al-Nâr which bears his name. In May 1966, the head of St. Titus, the first bishop of Crete, arrived on board the destroyer « Doxa » in Heraklion, where Mgr. Olivotti presented the relic to H. B. Eugenius, the Archbishop of Crete. Inspired by the goodwill caused by the return of these relics, other communities followed the example ; and on April 13, 1967 the relics of St. George the New Martyr of Cyprus were translated from Acre to Nicosia in Cyprus where they repose in the Cathedral of St. John. On July 17 of the same year, the right arm of St. Isidore, which the Venetians had acquired in 1125, was returned from the Cathedral of San Marco to the Island of Chios.

It is within this context that we should place the request of Pope Cyril VI of Alexandria to Pope Paul VI of Rome to « return to the Coptic Church the relics of St. Mark which repose in the Cathedral in Venice ». On March 29, 1967, it was announced in Cairo that once these relics were returned, they would be buried with the head of the Evangelist together with the relics of forty-two popes of the Coptic Church in the Cathedral of St. Mark in Alexandria. In fact, the Copts requested the return of the whole body so as « to join the head with the body of the Evangelist as a tribute to the African Church ». On June 20, 1968, a delegation of bishops and notables of the Coptic and Ethiopian churches left Cairo for Rome to receive the relics of the Evangelist. The delegation consisted of the Metropolitan Mark of Abû Tîg, Timâ and Tahta; the Metropolitan Michael of Asyût and Dair Abû Maqâr ; the Metropolitan Antonius of Sohâg ; the Metropolitan Peter of Akhmîm and Saqulta ; the Metropolitan Domitius of Gizah ; the Metropolitan Paul of Helwân ; Bishop Gregorius, Bishop of Theological Studies ; Archbishop Luke of Arussi (Asella) : Archbishop Peter of Begemder (Gondar) ; Archbishop John of Tigre (Makale) ; ten priests and some seventy Coptic notables. On June 22, 1968, Pope Paul VI presented to the delegation a relic said to be of St. Mark — a small particle of a bone, which was a gift of Cardinal Giovanni Urbani, the Patriarch of Venice, to the Pope of Rome. This relic, so I was told by members of the Catholic delegation, reposed in a reliquary in the treasury of the Cathedral of St. Mark in Venice, for the martyrium of the Evangelist was not opened for this purpose.

In the late evening of June 24, the above delegation accompanied by the Papal delegation arrived at Cairo Airport. The Papal delegation consisted of Cardinal Leon Etienne Duval, the Arshbishop of Algiers ; Cardinal Willebrands, Secretary of the Secretariate for Christian Unity ; Mgr. Olivotti, Co-adjutor of Cardinal Urbani ; P. Duprey, p.b. ; Abbé Teissié ; and Mgr. Nicotra representing the Oriental Congregation. Upon the arrival of the plane, the relic was personally carried by Pope Cyril VI of Alexandria to the car. The same night, the relic was translated to the Patriarchate at

Azbakiyah. The small particle, lying in a magnificent silver reliquary, was placed in a wooden box covered by a rich green velvet and fastened with golden cords in the form of a cross.

On June 26, the day following the inauguration of the new Cathedral of St. Mark in Abbasiyah, Cairo, a Divine Liturgy was celebrated by H. H. Cyril VI in commemoration of the nineteen hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of the Evangelist in Alexandria. Afterwards, Cyril VI offered the relic to H. I. M. Haile Sellassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia, for veneration. Then, Cyril VI carried the relic to the crypt beneath the high altar. Here the reliquary was solemnly lowered into a cavity of a square polished Aswân granite block. As the heavy granite lid was placed upon the cavity, the choirs of the Coptic Catholic and Coptic Evangelical Churches sang to the glory of God.

In spite of the previous pronouncements by the Coptic hierarchy, the relic was not joined to the head, which is believed to repose in Alexandria. On the contrary, a new cult centre was created in Cairo. Moreover, instead of the whole body of the Evangelist, only a small particle of a relic was in fact returned. Neither the box with the head nor the reliquary containing the other relic was opened for veneration or inspection, thereby either purposely or probably even unintentionally perpetuating the mystery of the relics of the Evangelist.

On June 27, the representatives of the Vatican proceeded to Alexandria where they were received by His Most Divine Beatitude Nicholas VI, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, the Reverend Fr. Nicholas Tenedios, the Recorder of the Patriarchate and Dr. Theodore D. Moschonas, the Remembrancer and Librarian. Then while the members of the delegations stood up reverently, Cardinal Duval offered to the Greek Orthodox Patriarch a precious reliquary of dark colour with a part of the relics of the Evangelist. « When in 1952 », said the Cardinal, « the urn was opened, they took reverently and for a future blessing the holy fragments, and the urn of the patron of Venice was closed. Now, on our coming to

Cairo, His Holiness the Pope gave to us also the present reliquary specially for the Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria which is also a daughter of St. Mark ». Having kissed the holy relics enclosed in the silver reliquary, the Patriarch thanked them with chosen words full of brotherliness, saying : « The Church of Alexandria receives joyfully for a blessing and strengthening the reliquary of her holy founder, and she will guard it as the apple of her eye ».

On July 7, these relics of St. Mark were exposed for veneration by the faithful in the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Sabas in Alexandria.

While recognizing the value of the traditional piety which is expressed towards the saints of old, the church historian and hagiologist is charged to attempt to lift the veil from the ancient and venerable traditions and myths. In the light of modern scholarship it is our mandate to arrive at some form of historical understanding of such events, which so often for purely non-religious purposes were shrouded with a wealth of traditions. With respect to the relics of St. Mark the Evangelist, we deal with essentially two traditions — namely the Alexandrian and the Venetian. For both communities, the relics of St. Mark were and are of great importance. For the Copts of Egypt, St. Mark is of the same eccleliastical significance as St. Peter is for Rome or Antioch. His preaching in Alexandria led to the establishment of the apostolic See of St. Mark, the patriarchs of Alexandria are believed to be the successors of the Evangelist, and his head was used by the Copts in the Rite of Consecration of Patriarchs, at least from the 11th to the 15th century. For Venice, St. Mark is the spiritual patron of the city, whose bodily presence provided great prestige at a time when its city fathers were in the process of establishing the city's place of power and prestige under the sun. In addition to the Churches of Alexandria and Venice, some relics of the Evangelist are also said to repose in other Latin churches in Italy, France, Belgium and Germany as well as in some Byzantine churches.

In order to clarify the issues at stake, we deem it necessary to state the major traditions and to disentangle the

an evaluation of the merits of the respective traditions. stories. In our concluding paragraph then we shall attempt

THE ALEXANDRIAN TRADITION

According to the tradition of the Coptic Church, St. Mark proceeded from Rome to Egypt where he founded the Apostolic See of Alexandria (1). « The Copts pride themselves on the apostolicity of their national church, whose founder was none other than St. Mark, the author of the oldest canonical Gospel used by both St. Matthew and St. Luke, and probably also by St. John. Mark is regarded by the Coptic hierarchy as the first in their unbroken chain of 117 patriarchs » (2). The dates pertaining to the arrival of the Evangelist in Alexandria vary between 48 and 75 (3). The *Acta Marci* (4) record that setting sail from Cyprus he came to the Pentapolis and from there proceeded to Alexandria ; other sources inform us that he went first « to the land of Egypt » before he began his missionary work in Alexandria (5). The chronology of the apostolic age is so uncertain

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(1) We must recognize that the Coptic tradition is somewhat late. Early authorities such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen make no mention of St. Mark in connection with the See of Alexandria, a fact which has led numerous scholars to doubt the veracity of the Coptic tradition. Cf. Unnik, W.C. v. *Evangelien aus dem Nilsand*. Frankfurt, 1960, p. 55, states « the tradition that Mark preached the Gospel in Egypt is highly uncertain ». In fact we have no documents prior to Eusebius to support the Coptic tradition, though Eusebius *(Hist. eccl.* II, xvi, xxiv) gives his account as a tradition which he had heard. Besides the later Coptic texts, the tradition is also found by Jerome (De Vir. Illst. viii, *P.L.* XXIII, 622), Epiphanius of Salamis (Haer.li, 6, *P.G.* XLI, 899), the Apostolic Constitutions (VII, XIVI), and the Martyrologium Romanum, April 25 (Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus II*, Paris. 1740, 344).

(2) Atiya, Aziz S., *A History of Eastern Christianity*. London, 1968, p. 25.

(3) An excellent discussion on the various dates for the missionary activity of St. Mark in Alexandria is found in Nahed al-Gamal, *The Tradition of St. Mark in the Coptic Church*. Cairo, 1957 (unpubl. thesis, American University in Cairo). Also, Kâmil Sâlih Nakhla, *Târîkh al-Qiddîs Mar Murqus al-Rasûl*. Cairo, 1952, pp. 57-58.

(4) For the *Acta Marci*, cf. H. G. Evelun White, *New Texts from the Monastery of St. Macarius*. New York, 1926.

(5) Crum, W. E., *Theological Texts from Coptic Papyri*. Oxford, 1913, No. 15.

that no final decision as to the travels of St. Mark can be offered.

The Coptic tradition states that the first Egyptian to be converted by the Evangelist was Anianus, and the story of his conversion is told by the various Coptic sources with almost no variance (1). As the Evangelist entered Rakote (2) and walked along its stony paths, the strap of his shoe was torn, and he went to a cobbler by the name of Anianus to have it fixed. When the cobbler took an awl to work on it, he accidentally pierced his hand and cried aloud : « God is one ». St. Mark rejoiced at this utterance, and after miraculously healing the cobbler's hand, preached the Gospel to him and his whole household. They were ignorant of the Old Testament prophecies which St. Mark quoted, and the only books they knew were those of the Greek philosophers (3).

Anianus and all his household believed and were baptized. The Christians in Egypt multiplied in number and the pagans took notice of them and sought to lay hands on the Evangelist. Scenting danger, St. Mark ordained Anianus bishop, together with three priests and seven deacons (4). Afterwards, he seems to have undertaken a missionary journey to Rome, from where he proceeded to Aquileia (5) and later went to visit the Pentapolis where he spent two years performing miracles, ordaining bishops and elders, and winning more converts. When at last he returned to Alexandria, he was overjoyed to find that the church had increased in numbers.

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(1) *Cf.* Coptic Synaxarium, *Patr. Orient.*, XVI, p. 347. This narrative is identical to that in the History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church, HPCC, *Patr. Orient.*, I, pp. 37-50.

(2) Rakote or fortress of Ra was an Egyptian fishing-village near Alexandria.

(3) Anianus is sometimes said to be an Alexandrian Jew (Hardy, E. R., *Christian Egypt : Church and People.* New York, 1952, p. 13). If he were a Jew, he would neither have been ignorant of the One God nor of the Old Testament books.

(4) Eutyches, however, maintained that St. Mark ordained twelve presbyters to be successors to the See. When one of the twelve was elected to be patriarch, the eleven would lay their hands on him and then select one to become presbyter in place of the one who was advanced to be patriarch, thus there were always twelve presbyters.

(5) Atiya, A. S., *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Rumors that the Christians threatened to overthrow the pagan deities infuriated the people of Alexandria. On the 29th of Barmûdah, which happened to be Easter Sunday of the year 68 A.D. (1), the pagans celebrated the festival of Serapis. Searching for the Evangelist, they found him in the Church at Baucalis (2) where the Christians celebrated the Easter Service. St. Mark was seized, dragged with a rope around his neck in the streets, and then he was incarcerated for the night. About midnight, an angel appeared to him strengthening him and promising him the crown of martyrdom. On the following day, the 30th of Barmûdah, the idolatrous populace of Alexandria dragged him again through the streets until he finally gave up the ghost. But they were not satisfied, and prepared for lighting a great fire where they placed the body for burning. But nature would not permit disrespect to the body of the saint, for it thundered and rained heavily and the fire was put out. Then the faithful assembled and took the body of St. Mark from the ashes, and nothing in it had been changed (3). And they carried it to the church in which they used to celebrate the liturgy, and they enshrouded it and prayed over it according to the established rites (4). And they dug a place for him and buried his holy body there that they might preserve his memory. And they placed him in the eastern part of the church, on the day on which his martyrdom was accomplished (5).

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(1) These dates are somewhat incorrect since the 29th of Barmûdah corresponds to the 24th of April (jul.) or the 7th of May (gregor.). In 68, however, Easter fell on the 10th of April (gregor.).

(2) The Church at Baucalis is said to have been built by the Christians of Alexandria prior to the return of St. Mark to the city. It was situated near the shore of the Eastern Harbour, beside a rock from which stone is hewn. Some 5th century marble capitals with decorations of flowers and trellis work are in the Cairo and the Alexandrian Museums.

(3) The description of this aspect of the martyrium corresponds to that of St. Polycarp and many other early martyrs, who remained untouched by the forces of nature. The prototype of this phenomenon is found in the story of the Three Confessors in the fiery furnace. Cf. Meinardus, O., « Mystical Phenomena Among the Copts, » *Ostkirchliche Studien*, XV, 4, 1966, pp. 147-153.

(4) The reference to the « established rite » betrays a rather late date for this part of the tradition.

(5) HPCC, *Patr. Orient.*, I, p. 50.

According to Coptic tradition, the body of the Evangelist still reposed in the Church of St. Mark at Baucalis in 311 at the time of the martyrdom of St. Peter, the 17th Patriarch of Alexandria. There is no question that this site was highly venerated by the Christians of Alexandria. Patriarchs were here enthroned and pilgrims from all over the ancient world repaired to the holy relics of St. Mark (1). Subsequent to the schism which separated the Chalcedonians or Melkites from the non-Chalcedonians or Copts in 451, the church in which the body of the Evangelist reposed remained in the hands of the former (2). At the time of the Arab Conquest, the Church of St. Mark escaped destruction (3). It was only during the recapture of Alexandria from Manuel and his Roman troops in the summer of 646, that the Arabs destroyed, plundered, and burned a great part of Alexandria including the Church of St. Mark (4). The account in the History of the Patriarchs describes the event as follows : « In the year 360 A.M. (5) the Muslims captured Alexandria, and they burned the Church of St. Mark which was built by the sea where his body was laid, and this was the place to which the father the patriarch Peter the Martyr went before his martyrdom and blessed St. Mark. At the burning of said church a miracle took place which was performed and that was that one of the captains of the ships, namely the captain of the ship of the duke Sanutius, climbed over the wall and descended into the church and came to the shrine, where he found that the coverings had been taken, for the plunderers thought that there was money in the chest. But when they found nothing there, they took away the covering from the body of St. Mark, but

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(1) Antoninus Martyr, who visited Alexandria between 560 and 570 stated that there reposed the relics of SS. Athanasius, Faustus, Epimachus, Antonius, Marcus and the bodies of many other saints. « Of the Holy Places Visited, » *Palestine Pilgrims Text Society*. II, p. 35. It was by the side of St. Mark's tomb in the Church at Baucalis that the election of the Patriarchs took place. Neale, J. M., *A History of the Holy Eastern Church*. London, 1847, vol. I, p. 9.

(2) Atiya, A. S., *op. cit.*, p. 28.

(3) Butler, Alfred J., *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of the Roman Dominion*. Oxford, 1902, p. 115.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 475.

(5) 360 A.M. or 644 A.D. This date should be 646 A.D.

his bones were left in their place. So the captain put his hand into the shrine and there he found the head of the holy Mark, which he took. Then he returned to his ship secretly and told no one of it, and hid the head in the hold among his baggage... . The ship in which the head of the Evangelist was hidden was miraculously prevented from leaving the harbour of Alexandria (1). Therefore, the duke returned the head of St. Mark to Benjamin the Patriarch, and as soon as he had received the pure head, the ship got under sail at once and departed in a straight course. The patriarch returned to the city, carrying the head in his bosom and the priests went before him with chanting and singing as befitted the reception of that sacred and glorious head. And he made a chest of plane wood with a padlock upon it, and placed the head therein, and he waited for a time in which he might find means to build a church » (2).

There is little doubt that the narrative of this miracle should be assigned to a date considerably after the theft of the body of the Evangelist by the Venetians in the 9th century. The account seems to indicate that the body perished with the destruction of the church and that the head was saved from destruction by being stolen and later returned, not to the original owners, the Melkites, but to the Coptic Patriarch Benjamin I. The narrative of the manufacture of the wooden reliquary for the head reflects a period in the history of the Coptic Church when, indeed, the head was carried from person to person and was used for the ceremony of consecration of the Coptic patriarchs. In this context it is interesting that in the year 700 a tradition was still maintained that the body (apparently the whole body) of the Evangelist reposed in Alexandria. Bishop Arculf's account written from his dictation by Adamnan, abbot of Iona, states explicitly

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(1) This is a well-known theme in early mediaeval hagiology. When the relics of St. Bishoi were to be transferred by boat, it refused to sail because those of Paul of Tammûah, St. Bishoi's spiritual brother, were left behind.

(2) HPCC. *Patr. Orient.*, I, pp. 494-500. The same narrative is found in the Coptic Synaxarium, Patr. Orient., X, pp. 561-563 under the 8th of Tubâh, and by Vansleb, J. M., *Histoire de l'Eglise d'Alexandrie*. Paris, 1677, pp. 168-169.

that « there (in Alexandria) is a large church in which St. Mark the Evangelist is interred. The body is buried in the eastern part of the church, before the altar, with a monument of squared marble over it » (1).

The story of the translation of the body of St. Mark by the Venetian noblemen from Venice to Alexandria is omitted in the early documents of the Coptic Church. Neither the 10th century Bishop of al-Ashmunain, Sawîrus ibn al-Muqaffa', the author of the first part of the History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church, nor the compiler of the Coptic Synaxarium refer to the theft of the relics of the Evangelist. At the same time, we cannot defend their silence by excusing it with the argument of ignorance. The translation of the body of St. Mark from Alexandria to Venice was a well known fact in Alexandria in the 9th century as is evident from the report of Bernard the Wise, who visited the city in 869 and records his impressions by saying : « The city of Alexandria is adjacent to the sea. It was here that St. Mark, preaching the Gospel, bore the episcopal dignity, and outside the eastern gate of the city is the monastery of the saint, with the church in which he formerly reposed. But the Venetians coming there obtained his body by stealth, and carrying it on shipboard, sailed home with it » (2).

Neither Bernard the Wise nor the Venetians refer to the translation of a body without a head. We must assume, therefore, that the tradition pertaining to the severance of the head from the body developed at a time when a relic of the Evangelist became important for functional or liturgical purposes, in this case probably the consecration of the patriarchs of the Coptic Church, who used to take the Apostolic Head of the divinely inspired Mark in their bosoms at the end of the Rite of Consecration (3). From the History of

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(1) Wriyht, Thomas, *Early Travels in Palestine*. London, 1848, p. 11.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 24.

(3) Burmester, O.H.E. Khs-. *The Rite of Consecration of the Patriarch of Alexandria*. Cairo, 1960, p. 83. According to Vansleb, *loc. cit.*, « since the Arab Conquest, all the patriarchs newly consecrated observe the custom to embrace the head and cover it with a new veil,

the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church, we learn that from the 11th to the 14th century the head of St. Mark played an increasingly important part in the history and the tradition of the Coptic Church. It is into this period, therefore, that we should place the emergence of the tradition of the above mentioned miracle of the manifestation of the head.

Later tradition even confused the miracle story of the theft of the head in the 7th century with the translation of the relics of the saint by the Venetians in the 9th century. Thus we read in the note to the 30th of Bâbah of the 1912 edition of the Coptic Synaxarium that « the time of the manifestation of the head of St. Mark is not known exactly, but it may be said that it was in the year 827, that is, the time of the manifestation of his holy members and their translation to the City of Venice in Italy, as some think. As regards the story which is common among people, some foreigners came especially to Alexandria, and they took the body and they placed it in a vessel which they had prepared for this purpose, but the ship remained and did not move, and they returned the head to its place and then the ship moved. Although it may be accepted by the mind as a fact, we cannot be assured of its truth exactly, since we do not find any of the historians of the time or others who mention it » (1).

The 11th century Bishop of Tinnis and compiler of the biographies of the patriarchs from Khâîl III (880-907) to Shenute II (1032-1046), namely Michael (2), implies that during the 11th century, the head of the Evangelist reposed in the Desert of the Wâdî al-Natrûn, undoubtedly in the Monastery of St. Macarius (3). Shortly after the retirement

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and present it to the people to be kissed, but today (1672) no longer having this head, they cannot perform this ceremony ». Cf. V. Mistrin, *Yûhannâ ibn Abî Zakarîâ ibn Sibâ' : Pretiosa Margarita de Scientiis Ecclesiasticis.* Cairo, 1966, pp. 284-287, 541,543.

(1) *Kitâb al-Sadîk al-Amîn.* Cairo, 1912, vol. I, p. 167.

(2) Graf. G., *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur.* Città del Vaticano, 1947, vol. II, p. 302.

(3) Evelyn White, H. G., *The Monasteries of the Wâdî 'n-Natrûn.* New York, 1933, vol. II, pp. 345-346.

of Zacharias (1004-1032), the 64th Patriarch of Alexandria, to the Wâdî al-Natrûn, a Turkish amîr obtained the head of St. Mark. It was said to him : 'The Christians will pay to thee whatsoever thou desirest for it'. Then he carried the head to Misr (Cairo) (1). When Bukairah al-Rashîdî, the Crossbearer, was informed of this, he took the head from the Turk for three hundred dinars and he carried it to the father, the patriarch, who was at that time in the Monastery of Abba Macarius, and most of the bishops were dwelling with him there (2). In the middle of the 11th century, the head of the Evangelist was translated from the Monastery of St. Macarius in the Wâdî al-Natrûn to Alexandria. During the patriarchate of Christodoulus (1047-1077), the 66th Patriarch of Alexandria, the head of St. Mark was in Alexandria. Here it reposed in the house of Abû Yahyâ Zakariyâ, who was a favourite of the Sultan and his wazir, 'Alî ibn Ahmad al-Girgânî (3). When Abû Yahyâ Zakariyâ fell sick and his pain became intense, several Christian notables of Alexandria assembled and debated about the future of the head of St. Mark, for they feared in case of his death that his house would be seized and with it the head of the Evangelist. After the death of Abû Yahyâ Zakariyâ, they took the box in which was the head, and they carried it to the house of Gabriel ibn Kuzmân, since his house was near to that of Abû Yahyâ Zakariyâ. Then when it was night, they carried the box into the house of Mansûr ibn Mufarrag. But when they arrived with the box, Mansûr ibn Mufarrag stood in the corridor and he swore that the head should not enter his house for fear of the Sultan, because he had already experienced such difficult matters as confiscation and fines. Then Surûr ibn Matrûh took the head and went with it to his house, and his house was opposite to the aforesaid house. Then the priest Simon, who later became Bishop of Tinnis, said to him: « I will transfer the head from thy house

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(1) This statement presumes that the head of the Evangelist was in the desert.

(2) *HPEC*, II, ii, p. 201.

(3) Abû Yahyâ was the representative of the Patriarch Sehnute II (1032-1046) and a friend of the Caliph al-Mustansir (1036-1094).

to my house, and I and my brother will serve it », and they went and took it (1). Some time later, the head of the Evangelist reposed in the house of Mawhûb ibn Mansûr, where an incident occurred which is recorded. Abû'l-'Alâ, the brother of Mawhûb ibn Mansûr, entertained doubts about the authenticity of the relic. One night, St. Mark appeared to Mawhûb and informed him that his brother had doubts about him (St. Mark). When Mawhûb told this story to his brother, he marvelled and was frightened, and he went to where the head of St. Mark was and he prayed and besought pardon from him (2).

The association of the head of St. Mark with Mawhûb ibn Mufarrag al-Iskandârânî, a deacon in Alexandria, ought to be placed into the latter part of the 11th century. Mawhûb ibn Mufarrag is a well known person to the church-historian for his long list of relics which appear in the biography of Cyril II (1078-1092), the 67th Patriarch of Alexandria. What happened to the holy relic after the 11th century is rather uncertain, although the relic continued to be transferred from house to house rather than being placed in any of the major churches or shrines of Alexandria. A very significant reference with respect to the head of the Evangelist appears in the biography of Cyril ibn Laqlaq (1235-1243), the 75th Patriarch of Alexandria, where it is stated that the head reposed in the house of Ibn al-Sakurî. « And it is said that it was the head of Peter the beatified martyr (3), because the head of the Apostle, the Evangelist, was with his body when the Greeks (al-Rûm) transported him to Venice (al-Bundukiah). And it was brought out for him (Cyril) according to the custom ; as regards this head, it was forty-eight years (that) it had not been taken out, the period of the occupation (of the Throne) of Abba

(1) *HPEC*, II, iii, p. 265.

(2) *HPEC*, II, iii, pp. 275-276.

(3) Peter I, the 17th Patriarch of Alexandria. Cf. Bedjan, P. *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*. Paris, 1895, V, p. 543. Hyvernat, H., *Les actes des martyrs de l'Egypte*. Paris, 1886-1887, I, p. 263. François Nau, « Les martyrs de saint Léonce de Tripoli et de saint Pierre d'Alexandrie d'après les sources syriaques, » *Analecta Bollandiana*, XIX, 1900, pp. 9-13.

John (1), twenty-eight years, and the period of the delay (in making a new patriarch) after him (which was passed) in falsehood and discord and contrivings twenty years, and it (the head) was placed in a room, and he (the patriarch) enveloped it in a new covering according to the custom » (2).

This, in fact, is the one and only reference in Coptic sources which states that the head was translated together with the body to Venice. Forgotten is the narrative of the miraculous manifestation of the head at the time of Benjamin I ; forgotten or unknown is the miracle caused by the head in the house of Mawhûb ibn Mansûr. Undoubtedly Venetian merchants must have spread in Alexandria their local tradition that the whole body reposed in Venice. And yet, a head did exist, a head which had been used for some time or « according to the custom » in the Rite of Consecration of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church. It is interesting that the chronicler should include the tradition that « it was the head of Peter ». The possibility of this being the head of the beatified « Seal of the Martyrs » is increased by the tradition which states that his martyrdom in 311 took place at Baucalis near the tomb where St. Mark was beheaded (3).

Mawhûb, who in the latter part of the 11th century had recorded all the relics which he could identify, omitted the relics of St. Peter and merely stated that he had seen the blood of Peter the Martyr, the 17th Patriarch of Alexandria (4).

The uncertainty with regard to the head of the Evangelist which is reflected in the biography of Cyril ibn Laqlaq is supported by the silence of Abû'l-Makârim, commonly known as Abû Sâlih the Armenian. This author, who provides us otherwise with a great deal of information about

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(1) This was John VI, who served as patriarch from 1188-1216.

(2) Ms. Arabe 302, Bibl. Nationale de Paris, fol. 319 verso.

(3) O'Leary, De Lacy, *The Saints of Egypt*. London, 1937, pp. 224-225.

(4) *HPEC*, II, iii, pp. 358-362.

the relics which were venerated by the Copts during the latter part of the 12th century, omitted any reference to this most important Coptic treasure in his famous study on *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt* (1). Moreover, Ludolph von Suchem (1350), who mentions the relics of many saints in the churches of Alexandria, omits any reference to St. Mark (2). Should we assume that the reason for this silence was because the head reposed in a private house or because there existed some uncertainty as to its authenticity ? Yet, doubt and uncertainty about this so important relic for the liturgical life of the Coptic hierarchy had to be dispelled. Numerous stories and traditions must have circulated in Cairo and Alexandria and some of the more thoughtful theologians must have wondered about the truth. In the 14th century, Abû'l-Barakât ibn Kabar, the most distinguished of the medieval Coptic theologians, wrote an account pertaining to the head of the Evangelist, which was to become the standard version for the Coptic Church, often repeated and believed to this day (3). « And his martyrdom (Mark's) was at the end of Barmûdah, the 27th Nisan, in the reign of Tiberius, and it is said that his body was burned with fire, and it is said that it was still buried in the eastern church on the shore of Alexandria up to the time when it was taken by craft by some Franks (al-Farang), those of Venice. They stole the body and they left the head. And they went with the body to Venice, where it is now. And it (the head) was transferred to a house in Alexandria known as that of the Sons of Shukrî (aûlâd Shukrî) and it is in it till now » (4). With respect to the locality of the relic, Abû'l-Barakât merely confirms the statement of the biographer of Cyril ibn Laqlaq ; otherwise he clearly assigns the body to Venice, the head to Alexandria !

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(1) Evetts, B. T. A. (ed.), Oxford, 1895.

(2) « Description of the Holy Land, » *Palestine Pilgrims Text Society*, XII, p. 46.

(3) « The Venetians stole the headless body of St. Mark in 828. » Atiya, A. S., *op. cit.*, p. 28.

(4) Abû'l-Barakât Ibn Kabar. *Misbah al-Zulmah li' 'Idah al-Khidmah* (The Lamp of Darkness for the Intelligence of the Service). Cairo 1950, p. 67.

THE VENETIAN TRADITION

The tradition of the translation of the relics of St. Mark from Alexandria to Venice must be evaluated in terms of the political and ecclesiastical tensions which existed between the emerging city of Venice (1) and the much older city of Aquileia, especially since by the 9th century both sees claimed apostolic origin based on the preaching of St. Mark. Moreover, the translation of the relics of the Evangelist served as a demonstrative means for the gradual secession of Venice from Byzantine domination. Whereas the former tutelary saint of the dogate had been St. Theodore, a Byzantine warrior-saint, the acquisition of the relics of St. Mark served as an unequivocal sign of Venice's movement towards independence. In fact, « the gradual transition from Byzantine sovereignty to independence follows a course parallel to the gradual disappearance of the original Greek Patron Saint of the dogate »(2).

Latin manuscripts of the 8th century inform us that as a disciple of St. Peter, St. Mark was commissioned by him to preach the Gospel in Aquileia (3). Moreover, after founding a church in this ancient Adriatic city, St. Mark is said to have written his Gospel for the use by the north Italian Christians of Aquileia prior to his journey to Egypt. Before his departure from Aquileia, St. Mark designated St. Hermagoras, his pupil, to be his successor, whom he took with him to Rome for consecration for this newly founded bishopric. St. Hermagoras is said to have suffered martyrdom in his city. Aquileia had adopted St. Mark as its founder and patron in or after the 5th century, certainly before

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(1) In the year 716 the Dux Ursus was for the first time elected by the tribunal and the clergy, and not appointed by the Byzantine emperor. This date then, which coincides with the promulgation of Leo III's iconoclassic policy, can be regarded as the beginning of the national history of Venice.

(2) Demus, Otto, *The Church of San Marco in Venice*. Washington, 1960, p. 21.

(3) The earliest datable reference to St. Mark in connection with Aquileia is in Paulus Diaconus' *Gesta Episcoporum Mettensium*, Migne, P. L. XCV, p. 699, to be dated between 783 and 786.

the Venetians ever thought of acquiring the spiritual protection from the Evangelist. The reason for Aquileia's interest in St. Mark is evident from its concern to be recognized as one of the patriarchal sees of the Church. « Aquileia, in fact, aimed at supplanting Alexandria as the Markian patriarchate on the strength of the assertion that Mark had founded the Church of Aquileia prior to that of Alexandria » (1).

Aquileia played a significant role in the ecclesiastical history of the north-Italian churches (2). During the 5th and 6th centuries, the diocese of Aquileia included all of northeast Italy with Illyria, Noricum and Rhaetia ; and Verona, Trent, Pola, Belluno, Treviso, Padua were among its suffragans. Its Bishop Macedonius (535-556) had refused to acknowledge the decisions of the 5th Oecumenical Council at Constantinople (553) and thus seceded from Rome, assuming in 557 the title of Patriarch, which had been accorded to him by the barbarians. Soon after, however, Northern Italy was over-run by the Lombards, and the patriarch fled to Grado, six miles away. In 606 the Metropolitan Candidian of Aquileia in Grado submitted to the pope, though his Lombard suffragan did not follow him and there were for a long time rival patriarchs of both Aquileia and Grado (3). The Aquileian schism led both patriarchs to claim to be the legitimate successors of St. Mark. While the patriarch of Aquileia retained his title, the bishop of Grado styled himself patriarch of Nova Aquileia. On June 6, 827, a synod was convened in Mantua which was presided over by representatives of the Pope of Rome and the Frankish Emperor. The purpose of this gathering was to restore the old patriarchate of Aquileia and to reduce the See of Grado to the rank of a suffragan bishopric, a « plebs » of Aquileia. This, however, was an indignity to the Doge of Venice and

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(1) Demus, O., *op. cit.*, p. 31.

(2) De Rubeis, M. B., *Monumenta ecclesiae Aquilejensis.* Strasbourg, 1740. Aquileia, a former city of the Roman empire and a mediaeval western patriarchate at the head of the Adriatic is now a village with a population of 2,000.

(3) One of the twelve townships of Venice.

even threatened his independence from the Frankish kingdom. It was, therefore, opportune that just at this crucial moment in the history of Venice the Doge Justinian Partecipacius should acquire the relics of the very saint who had been held in highest esteem by his principal opponents, namely, the city and the church of Aquileia. The translation not only worked against Aquileia, it also supported Grado, and played a not insignificant role in the secession from Constantinople. It is into this context that we should also place the origin of the tradition of the preaching of St. Mark in Venice (1).

In the *Vite de' Santi spettanti alle Chiese di Venezia* we are informed how « St. Mark after departing from Aquileia sailed in a small boat to the marshes of Venice. There were at that time some homes built upon a certain high bank called Rialto, and the boat driven by the wind was anchored in a marshy place, when St. Mark, snatched into ecstasy, heard the voice of an angel saying to him : 'Peace be to thee Mark, here shall thy body rest' » (2).

With respect to the historicity of the translation of the relics which were believed to be those of St. Mark from Alexandria to Venice during the administration of the Doge Justinian Partecipacius (827-830), there can be little doubt, although we have to recognize that the narrative did not acquire its final form much before the end of the 11th century. In fact, « the oldest of the extant manuscript versions of the translation are of the 11th century, and for intrinsic reasons it must be assumed that the final form took place shortly after 1050 » (3). In more than one way, the narrative follows the model of other translations.

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(1) We may legitimately assume that the tradition of the translation of the holy relics of St. Mark to Aquileia as recorded by Ordericus Vitalis (1141) is older than the Venetian tradition. The Aquileian tradition spread at the time when the Patriarch of Aquileia regained the primary position in Italy after the Pope of Rome in 964. Lipsius, Rich. A., *Die Apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden*. Braunschweig, 1883, vol. III, p. 353.

(2) Venice, 1761, vol. I, p. 126, cited by Ruskin John, *The Stones of Venice*. London, 1925, vol. II, p. 52. This tradition should be assigned to the 13th century.

(3) Demus, O., *op. cit.*, p. 9.

The story of this peculiar translation commences with a lengthy introduction in which the author tries to demonstrate the divine right of the Venetians to the possession of the relics of the Apostle. Although Leo the Armenian (813-820), the Byzantine Emperor, had strictly prohibited any trade with Alexandria since it was in the hands of the Muslims, two Venetian noblemen and merchants, Bonus, a tribune of Malamocco (1) and Rusticus of Torcello (2) sailed to Alexandria. Having received word that the Muslims had ordered the removal of marble columns and slabs from Alexandria, they felt justified to safeguard the bodily remains of the Apostle from the hands of the « infidels ». In fact, Alexandria had just suffered severely from the violent clashes between the Andalusians (3) and the troops of the Caliph al-Mâ'mûn (813-833).

Upon their arrival in Alexandria, the two Venetian merchants repaired to the Church of St. Mark which belonged to the Melkites, where they engaged in lengthy arguments with the Greek custodians of the holy relics, namely with the Alexandrian monk Stauracius and priest Theodorus. The narrative presents the arguments in the form of a tetralogue between the two Venetians and the Alexandrian custodians, the principal point of the Venetians being that S. Mark had been bishop of Aquileia (4) prior to his episcopal office in Alexandria and that a removal to Venice would merely constitute the return to his old home (5). Moreover, employing the hearsay that there was a design to destroy the church in which the relics were kept, they succeeded in convincing the custodians to hand the relics over to them. They found

(1) Malamocco, one of the twelve townships of Venice was an important political centre which later was swallowed up by the sea.

(2) Torcello, one of the twelve townships of Venice, was a notable commercial centre.

(3) These Andalusians had staged a rebellion at Cordova which had gone near to over-throwing the Islamic monarchy.

(4) There is little doubt that the tradition of St. Mark's episcopacy of Aquileia preceded that of his preaching in Venice. The latter tradition developed only after the successful translation of the relics from Alexandria to Venice !

(5) The first patron of Venice, however, was St. Theodore in whose honour the Venetians had built a church.

little difficulty in removing the stone lid from the sarcophagus in which the body of the Evangelist reposed on its back, wrapped in a silk shroud, the edges of which were fastened together with many seals down the front. The Alexandrian custodians turned the saint on his face, cut the shroud down the back, removed the body of St. Mark and placed in the shroud the body of St. Claudia (1) that lay nearby, and then sewed up the seam and reversed the body, so that the unbroken seals would be shown to anyone who again opened the tomb. When the saint's body was brought out again into the church, so great a fragrance spread through the church and the town (2), that the neighbours came running together and a suspicion was whispered that the Venetian strangers might be stealing the saint. But the seals on the shroud dispelled the suspicion. The Venetians had meanwhile placed the body in a great chest and covered it with vegetables and pork. The harbour officials did in fact insist on looking into the chest to see what goods were being exported, but seeing the pork, they cried out in disgust. So the chest was taken on board of one of the ships, and then the saint's body was wrapped in one of the sails and slung up to the yard-arm till their departure. Then it was placed with due honour on the deck, with candles and incense before it, and the flotilla sailed amidst a succession of miracles to the Adriatic. The crew of another ship, doubting the authenticity of the relic, was punished in so far as the ship with the bodily remains of the Evangelist rammed the other ship and did not move away until the unbelieving sailors acknowledged the genuineness of the relics. The

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(1) It is not easy to identify this saint. St. Claudia is commemorated in the Ethiopian Church on January 2. She does not appear in the Coptic Synaxarium and her relics are not mentioned in the 11th century inventory of relics by Mawhûb ibn Muffarag al-Iskandârânî, a deacon in Alexandria. The relics of St. Claudius reposed in the 11th century in the Church of St. Victor in Asyût. Meinardus, O., « An Inventory of the Relics of Saints in the Coptic Church in Egypt, » *Ostkirchliche Studien*, XVII, 2-3, 1968, pp. 134-173.

(2) The « odour of sanctity » is a well known phenomenon, and the belief that exceptional virtues are accompanied by a pleasant odour was widespread (cf. *II Cor.* 2:15). Cf. the *vitae* of SS. Simeon Stylites, Theresa of Avila, Clara Marie of the Passic Christi, Giovanna Maria della Croce, Maria Francescana, Maria degli Angeli, *et al.*

sleeping sailors were then warned by the Evangelist himself that they were approaching the coast.

Upon their arrival in Venice, Bishop Ursus (1) and his clergy received the relics and conducted them in solemn procession to the palace of the Doge Justinian Partecipacius. While being carried to their temporary resting place, the holy relics became so heavy that they could hardly be lifted up (2). The Doge vowed to build a church for the bodily remains of the Evangelist, but he died before he could keep his promise. Immediately after the translation of the relics, Justinian recalled his brother John, who for many years had lived in exile in Constantinople, and proclaimed him co-regent and his successor. After the death of Justinian, John II Partecipacius fulfilled the vow of his brother to build a church in honour of the relics of the Evangelist (3).

August F. Gfrörer is quite correct in his assumption when he states that the two Venetians were not in Alexandria by accident, but rather on a mission from the Doge to acquire the body of St. Mark. In fact, there was hardly a more demonstrative method to impress the ancient world of the apostolic claims of the Venetian Republic than by pronouncing the « return » of the Apostle to what they maintained to have been his first see. It is significant that upon the return from Alexandria, Bonus of Malamocco and Rusticus of Torcello deposited the relic not at Grado, hitherto the religious centre of the islands, but at Rialto, where it

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(1) He was the fourth bishop of Venice. In 775 with the consent of Adrian I and the Patriarch of Grado. an episcopal see was established on the island of Olivolo, later Castelo. The first bishop nominated was Obelerius who was invested and enthroned by the doge and consecrated by the patriarch.

(2) This is a common phenomenon in the narratives of translations of relics, indicating that the relics should not be moved further. Cf. the Translation of St. Menas from Alexandria to the Shrine of Abû Mînâ at Maryût.

(3) *Acta Sanctorum*, Aprilis, III, pp. 353-355. Hodgson, F. C., *The Early History of Venice*. London, 1901, pp. 82-84. Demus, Otto, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9. Lipsius, R. A., *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 353. Gfroerer, A. F., *Geschichte Venedigs von seiner Gruendung bis zum Jahre 1084*. Graz, 1872, p. 164.

was undoubtedly safer in view of any possible claims of the Church of Aquileia. Furthermore, in Rialto the presence of the holy body would also impart some of its sanctity to the Doge Justinian, thus making him a spiritual personage, and possibly cause the Patriarch of Grado to transfer his see as a spiritual servant of the Evangelist to Venice ! The ecclesiastical significance of the translation of the relics of St. Mark can hardly be overrated. The move contained an unmistakable spike against the church and city of Aquileia, which had just succeeded in gaining recognition as the legitimate See of St. Mark, as well as against the local patriarch whose transfer to Venice would greatly enhance the status of the city (1).

However, the political designs of the doge went against the machinations of Pope Gregory IV (827-844) who had bestowed upon Venerius of Grado the pallium so as to let it be known that he would not tolerate a transfer of the patriarchal see from Grado to the city of Venice. The papal interference in the political and ecclesiastical emergence of Venice may also explain the rather secretive developments with respect to the relics of the Evangelist. For after the successful translation of the holy relics one would have expected great festivities in Venice. Instead, according to the will of the Doge Justinian, John II, his successor, placed the relics in a chapel in a corner of the ducal palace. We may guess, therefore, that the Pope, perhaps expecting certain revolutionary claims from the Venetians, had conveyed to them an ultimatum either to transfer the relics to the Cathedral of Grado, which still served as the acknowledged ecclesiastical centre, or to promise not to exploit the possession of the relics for any political or ecclesiastical purposes (2). Apparently, Justinian and his successors selected the second alternative and kept the relics hidden from the people. Thus, the holy of holies of the emerging state of Venice rested in obscurity !

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(1) Gfroerer, A. F., *op. cit.*, p. 168. Kretschmayr, Heinrich, *Geschichte von Venedig*. Gotha, 1905, vol. I, p. 65.

(2) St. Mark's Church in Venice became a cathedral only in 1807 !

Although the Venetian Christians did not immediately profit by the acquisition of the body of St. Mark, the Doge had nevertheless proved an important point. Moreover, the fact that the place of the holy relics of the saint remained a highly guarded secret, known only to a few who were initiated, served even more than one useful purpose, especially also in the interest of the Venetians. For we must remember that just as the Venetians acquired the body of the Evangelist from Alexandria, others, especially the clergy from Aquileia, could have attempted to steal the body of the saint from the Venetians. That this thought was not completely unfounded is evident from the claim of the Benedictine monks of Reichenau, who maintained to have acquired the body of the Evangelist from the Venetians and taken it to their island in the Untersee of the lake of Constance in 830 (1).

Nevertheless, the Doge John II built a church in honour of the relics of St. Mark, which was consecrated in 836. This church, however, was not a separate building, but rather a part of the ducal palace, probably a chapel. In 976 this chapel was burned along with the ducal palace in the insurrection against the Doge Candianus IV, and it is very probable that the body of the Evangelist perished in the conflagration. But since the revenues of the church depended heavily upon the devotion excited by these relics, it would have been unwise to permit the confession of their loss, and thus another miracle entered the Venetian tradition pertaining to the relics of the Evangelist.

The Doge Pietro Orseolo rebuilt the church, though the place in which the body of the Evangelist reposed had been altogether forgotten so that the Doge Vitale Falieri (1082-1094) was entirely ignorant of the place of the venerable deposit. At last, moved by confidence in the Divine Mercy, they determined to implore with prayer and fasting the manifestation of so great a treasure, which did not now depend

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(1) Cf. Martyrology of Reichenau, April 9, translatio corporum St. Marci evangelistae et S. Senesii martyris in Augiam anno DCCCXXX.

upon any human effort. A general fast was proclaimed and a solemn procession appointed for the 25th of June, and while the people assembled in the church interceded with God in fervent prayers, they beheld with much amazement and joy a slight shaking in the marbles of a pillar, near the place where the altar of the cross is now, which presently falling to the earth, exposed to the view of the rejoicing people the chest of bronze in which the body of the Evangelist was laid. When the sarcophagus was discovered, St. Mark extended his hand out of it with a gold ring on one of the fingers which he permitted a noble of the Dolfin family to remove (1). However, eight days after the occurrence of the manifestation of the sacred body, the holy relics were hidden again. According to Andreas Dandolo, the 14th century chronicler of Venice (2), only the Primicerius of the ducal chapel, the Procurator of St. Mark and the Doge had any knowledge of this site of the relics. « In order, however, that the faith of those who have not seen it should not be shaken, I, Andreas Dandolo, who administered for a longer time the office of the Procurator, and now serve through the grace of Christ as Doge of Venice, declare with the words of the Evangelist St. John, 'and he that saw it bare record, and his record is true ; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe' » (3). In addition to the body of the Evangelist, San Marco had also acquired the relics of the disciples of the Evangelist. During the dogate of Pietro Polani (1130-1148) the relics of Anianus, St. Mark's successor in Alexandria, were translated to Venice. About the same time, also those of SS. Hermagoras and Fortunatus, St. Mark's Aquileian disciples, entered the possession of the Venetians. In terms of secondary relics associated with the Evangelist, there was the *Cathedra*

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(1) Ruskin, John, *op. cit.*, p. 55. Kretschmayr states that on October 8, 1094 at the occasion of the rededication of the Church of St. Mark, the body of St. Mark was placed into the vicinity of the high-altar. *Op. cit.*, p. 153. Acta Sanctorum, Aprilis III, p. 352.

(2) Dandolo (1307-1354) was the last Doge who was buried in the Church of St. Mark.

(3) Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* cited by Gfroerer. A. F., *op. cit.*, p. 168.

Sancti Marci, the gospel and the ring of the Evangelist which were treasured by the Venetians (1).

During the Middle Ages, the pilgrims to the Holy Land who embarked in Venice were normally prevented from seeing the relics of the Evangelist. Was it a matter of genuine fear of the authorities that they might be stolen or was it a matter of sheer ignorance ? We don't know. Bertrandon de la Brocquière (1432) was shown in Venice several relics, and he mentions the body of St. Helena as well as several bodies of the Holy Innocents, though he is silent about the relics of the patron of the city (2). Bernhard von Breydenbach (1483-84) merely stated that the body of St. Mark is recorded as being in the church dedicated to him (3), and Felix Fabri was shown the treasury of St. Mark where he saw the tomb and the body of St. Isidore (4). « The body of St. Mark, however, which the Venetians brought from Alexandria to their city », he did not see, because it is said that a monk stole it and carried it away into Germany to Owia Major. In fact, all that he was shown of the Evangelist in Venice was a finger (5) of the saint (6).

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(1) Demus, O., *op. cit.*, p. 16.

(2) Wright, Thomas, *Early Travels in Palestine.* London, 1848, p. 285.

(3) Davies, H. Wm., *Bernhard von Breydenback and his Journey to the Holy Land.* London, 1911, p. xii.

(4) Felix Fabri, « The Book of the Wanderings, » *Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society,* VII, p. 102.

(5) The reference to St. Mark's finger is interesting especially in view of the fact that since the 3rd century, the Evangelist is known as the stumpfingered or the one whose finger is mutilated, cf. Hippolytus, « Philosophumena, » VII, xxx, P. G. VI, 3334. Another tradition asserts that St. Mark after he embraced the Christian Faith cut off his thumb to unfit himself for the Jewish priesthood ; others said that his fingers were naturally stumpy !

(6) *Die Pilgerfahrt des Bruders Felix Faber ins Heilige Land, Anno MCDLVXXXIII.* Berlin, 1964, p. 12.

OTHER RELICS OF ST. MARK

In the inventory of the Treasury of San Marco in Venice we find listed a tooth, a thumb and a ring of the Evangelist (1). An arm and several bones of St. Mark are also claimed by the parish church of Limours near Paris (2). In Cologne, there are five churches which claim parts of the body of St. Mark, namely the Church of St. Gereon, the Church of the Holy Virgin, the Church of St. Severin, the Church of St. Cunibert and the Church of St. Pantaleon. A small part of the relic of the Evangelist is also claimed by the Church of St. Mark in Rome. Another arm of St. Mark is said to repose in the Church of St. Autbertus, a 6th century bishop, in Cambrai, northern France, while a large part of another arm and a hand of the Evangelist were believed to be in the Monastery of Laetiens (Laetiensi coenobio) in Belgium. An additional arm is claimed by the congregation of Maricoles (3) and three bones are said to repose in the Cathedral of Tournai in Belgium (4).

Of special interest to our study is the claim of the head of the Evangelist by the city of Soissons. After the establishment of the Latin Kingdom of Thessalonica in 1205, Nivelo de Chérisy, Bishop of Soissons, who had taken an active part in the 4th Crusade, was appointed first Latin archbishop of Thessalonica by Pope Innocent III in 1206. In Constantinople he had acquired a considerable quantity of relics which included among others the heads of SS. Mark and Stephen as well as a finger of St. Thomas, a thorn of the crown and a part of the veil of the Holy Virgin. These and many other relics Nivelo bestowed upon the monasteries and churches of his former diocese, especially the Monastery of the Benedictines of the Holy Virgin of Soissons. The authenticity of these relics, however, has been disputed

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(1) Molinier, Emile, *Le Trésor de la Basilique de Saint Marc à Venise*. Venice, 1888, Nos. 37 and 38.

(2) *Acta Sanctorum*, Aprilis III, p. 353.

(3) Re, « item de brachio ejus apud Maricolenses Benedictinos. »

(4) *Acta Sanctorum, loc. cit.*

by many authorities. Moreover, there is no special observation for the veneration of the head of St. Mark in Soissons (1).

In the Byzantine World, some relics of St. Mark are venerated in the Monastery of Kykko in Cyprus and in the Church of St. Photine in Nea Smyrna in Athens.

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According to the Venetian tradition of the translation of the relics of St. Mark, the genuineness of the body which Bonus and Rusticus acquired in Alexandria is not at all questioned. For that matter, a very detailed description of the translation is used to destroy any possible doubt about the authenticity of the relics. At the same time, the historicity of the narrative should be disputed for more than one reason. The story of the exchange of the shrouds presupposes the existence of the relics of St. Claudia, a saint whose name is unknown to the Byzantine and Coptic hagiologists. Undoubtedly, the Alexandrians had replaced the loss of the relics incurred at the time of the Arab Conquest, which explains that the Venetian noblemen did, in fact, translate a body. The question, though, still remains to be answered, whose body ? Of course, we shall never know (2). The references to the odour of sanctity and the punishment of those who doubted the genuineness of the relics are part of the traditional repertoire of mediaeval translations. Their purpose is obvious ; these phenomena provide additional supernatural guarantees to demonstrate the authenticity of the relics.

Yet, even those relics which were translated from Alexandria to Venice perished in the fire in 976. Thus, similar-

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(1) Personal communication by the Very Rev. Gabriel Collangettes, prélat de la maison de sa sainteté chancine titulaire de la Cathédrale de Soissons, to the author (19. III. 1970). Cf. also *Annales du Diocèse de Soissons*, III, p. 19

(2) Prof. Ev. Breccia, *Alexandrea ad Aegyptum*. Bergamo, 1922, p. 54, states that the two Venetian merchants « removed the corpse which had been considered to be that of St. Mark ».

ly to the miraculous preservation of the head in Alexandria in the 7th century, this time the whole body was said to be miraculously saved from destruction, thereby bestowing upon the relics again additional supernatural qualities. The secrecy with which the Venetians have protected their relics over the centuries could give rise to various interpretations. On the whole, we may suspect that the Venetians were more interested in preserving the belief in their relics than in publicising or even exhibiting their possessions, especially in view of the competitive claims of other churches.

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This is not the place to discuss at length the thorny problem concerning the historical truth of the widely held tradition of the ministry of the Evangelist in Alexandria. We have mentioned elsewhere that the 2nd and 3rd century Alexandrian authorities were silent about St. Mark's ministry in Egypt ; at the same time, however, a tradition of his preaching in Alexandria was certainly known to Eusebius. We may be assured that once the tradition of St. Mark's ministry in Alexandria was firmly established, a cult with all its mythological, martyrological, liturgical, ecclesiastical and social aspects developed very rapidly. We know that the cult of relics prevailed very widely throughout Egypt during the 4th and 5th centuries as is evident from the severe and outspoken criticism of Shenute about the Christian villagers who invented patron saints and erected shrines for their relics which they discovered and assumed to be those of the martyrs of the church. There is no doubt, therefore, that Sawîrus ibn al-Muqaffa', the 10th century historian of the Coptic Church, used firmly established written and oral traditions for his biographies of the patriarchs, though the question remains to what extent these traditions corresponded to the actual historical events.

The description of the martyrdom of the Evangelist clearly presupposes a cult of the relics of St. Mark, for only thus can we understand the references to the incorruptibility

of the body at the time of his martyrdom and the burial of the saint according to « the established rites ». Relics believed to be those of St. Mark were certainly venerated in Alexandria until the Arab Conquest of the city. The resultant disturbances seem to have caused the relics to disappear. Since, however, at the time of the compilation of this part of the History of the Patriarchs the Venetians had already acquired the body of the person believed to be St. Mark, it was imperative to camouflage the total loss by emphasizing that the most significant part of the body, namely the head, had been miraculously saved and was still in the hands of the Copts. As indicated, the tradition of the miraculous manifestation of the head served at least four purposes : It established the severance of the head from the body, the loss of the body in the course of the disturbances, the miraculous preservation of the head and finally the return of the head not to its previous, but to its « rightful » owner, namely the Coptic patriarch.

By the 11th century the head became an important liturgical object, which is evident from the minute and detailed descriptions of its whereabouts. When doubts and uncertainty about its authenticity were expressed, its miraculous power rather than historical arguments were expected to convince the infidels of its genuineness. At the same time, doubt with respect to the authenticity of the head prevailed and not merely as an undercurrent among some « liberals ». By the 13th century the Venetian claims must have increased the sense of uncertainty among the Copts to the point that the chronicler of the biography of Cyril III repeats in writing what others believed to be the case, namely that the head which had been used for the Rite of Consecration of the Patriarchs belonged to Peter I, the 17th Patriarch of Alexandria, rather than to St. Mark. Yet, unmoved by doubt, the patriarch followed uncritically the established practice as prescribed in the Rite of Consecration of the Patriarch.

The liturgical significance of the head for the Copts as well as the widespread knowledge of the Venetian possession

of the body compelled Abû'l-Barakât to his compromise statement, with which he established a tradition which for centuries to come was to serve as the authoritative version of the Coptic Church. And yet in spite of this statement, doubt and uncertainty among the Copts must have increased over the years, for only thus can we explain the words by Johann Michael Wansleben that at the time of his writing (17th century) « no longer having his head, they (patriarchs) cannot perform this ceremony (of embracing the head at the time of their enthronement) ».

Inspired by the numerous mid-20th century translations of relics from the West to the East, Cyril VI, the 116th Patriarch of Alexandria, rediscovered the significance of the head of the Evangelist. According to the official version, the head was said to repose in an ebony chest in the crypt beneath the altar of St. Mark in the Coptic Cathedral of St. Mark in Alexandria. For the mid-twentieth century Copts, however, the significance of the head had dramatically changed from its original liturgical purpose, especially since none of the 20th century patriarchs had embraced the head at the occasion of their consecration. In fact, the kind of political arguments with which the Venetians justified the translation of the relics from Alexandria to Venice in the early Middle Ages was recently advanced by the Egyptian Christians when they demanded the return of the body from Venice to Alexandria with the claim : « It is not proper that the body be separated from the head, and the two should be rejoined as a tribute to the African Church and to the country in which the Evangelist lived and was martyred ».

CHAPTER IV

THE PATRIARCHS OF THE COPTIC CHURCH AND THE RULERS OF EGYPT

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
1.	St. Mark	d. 68	—	Nero	54-68
2.	Anianus	d. 83	—	Nero	54-60
				Galba	68-69
				Otho	69
				Vitellius	69
				Vespasian	69-79
				Titus	79-81
				Domitian	81-96
3.	Abilius	d. 95	—	Domitian	81-96
4.	Cerdon	d. 106	—	Nerva	96-98
				Trajan	98-117
5.	Primus	d. 118	—	Trajan	98-117
				Hadrian	117-138
6.	Justus	d. 129	—	Hadrian	117-138
7.	Eumenius	d. 141	—	Hadrian	117-138
				Antoninus Pius	138-161
8.	Marcianus	d. 152	—	Antoninus Pius	138-161
9.	Celadion	d. 166	—	Antoninus Pius	138-161
10.	Agrippinus	d. 178	—	Marcus Aurelius	161-180
11.	Julian	d. 188	—	Marcus Aurelius	161-180
				Commodus	180-192

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
12.	Demetrius I	d. 230	—	Commodus	180-192
				Pertinax	193
				Didius Julianus	193
				Septimius Severus	193-211
				Caracalla	211-217
				Macrinus	217-218
				Heliogabalus	218-222
				Alexander Severus	222-235
13.	Heracles	d. 246	—	Alexander Severus	222-235
				Maximinus	235-238
				Pupienus	238
				Gordianus	238-244
				Philippus	244-249
14.	Dionysius	d. 264	—	Philippus	244-249
				Decius	249-251
				Gallus	251-253
				Valerianus	253-260
				Gallienus	260-268
15.	Maximus	d. 282	—	Gallienus	260-268
				Claudius II	268-270
				Aurelianus	270-275
				Tacitus	275-276
				Florianus	276
				Probus	276-282
16.	Theonas	d. 300	—	Carus	282-283
				Numerianus	283-284
				Diocletian	284-305
17.	Peter I	d. 310	—	Diocletian	284-305
				Galerius	305-311
18.	Achillas	d. 311	—	Galerius	305-311
				Licinius	308-324
19.	Alexander I	d. 328	—	Licinius	308-324
				Constantine I	306-337

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
20.	Athanasius I	328-373	—	Constantine I	306-337
				Constantius II	337-361
				Julian	361-363
				Jovian	363-364
				Valens	364-378
21.	Peter II	373-378	—	Valens	364-378
				Gratian	367-383
				Valentinian	375-392
22.	Timothy I	378-384	—	Theodosius	379-395
23.	Theophilus	384-412	—	Theodosius	379-395
				Arcadius	395-408
				Theodosius II	408-450
24.	Cyril I	412-444	Abû Maqâr	Theodosius II	408-450
25.	Dioscorus	444-454	—	Theodosius II	408-450
				Marcian	450-457
26.	Timothy II	457-477	—	Marcian	450-457
				Leo I	457-474
				Zeno	474-491
27.	Peter III	477-489	—	Zeno	474-491
28.	Athanasius II	489-496	—	Zeno	474-491
				Anastasius	491-518
29.	John I	496-505	Abû Maqâr	Anastasius	491-518
30.	John II	505-516	Zugâg (Ennaton)	Anastasius	491-518
31.	Dioscorus II	516-518	—	Anastasius	491-518
				Justin I	518-527
32.	Timothy III	518-536	—	Justin I	518-527
				Justinian	527-565
33.	Theodosius I	536-567	—	Justinian	527-565
				Justin II	565-578
34.	Peter IV	567-576	Zugâg (Ennaton)	Justin II	565-578

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
35.	Damian	576-605	Tâbûr Abû Yuhinnis	Justin II	565-578
				Tiberius II	578-582
				Maurice	582-602
				Phocas	602-610
36.	Anastasius	605-616	—	Phocas	602-610
				Heraclius	610-634
37.	Andronicus	616-623	—	Heraclius	610-634
38.	Benjamin I	623-662	Qabriûs	Heraclius	610-634
				'Umar	634-644
				'Uthmân	644-656
				'Alî	656-661
				Al-Hasan ibn 'Alî	661
				Mu'âwiyah I	661-681
39.	Agathon	662-680	—	Mu'âwiyah I	661-681
40.	John III	680-689	Abû Maqâr	Yazîd I	680-683
				Mu'âwiyah II	683
				Marwân I	684-685
				'Abd al-Malik	685-705
41.	Isaac	690-692	Abû Maqâr	'Abd al-Malik	685-705
42.	Simon I	692-700	Zugâg (Ennaton)	'Abd al-Malik	685-705
43.	Alexander II	704-729	Zugâg (Ennaton)	'Abd al-Malik	685-705
				Al-Walîd ibn 'Abd al-Malik	705-715
				Sulaîmân	715-717
				'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azîz	717-720
				Yazîd II	720-724
				Hishâm	724-743
44.	Cosmas I	729-730	Abû Maqâr	Hishâm	724-743
45.	Theodore	730-742	Tamnûrah (Mareotis)	Hishâm	724-743

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
46.	Khâîl I	743-767	Abû Maqâr	Al-Walîd ibn Yazîd	743-744
				Yazîd III	744
				Ibrâhîm	744
				Marwân II	744-750
				Al-Saffâh	750-754
				Al-Mansûr	754-775
47.	Menas I	767-776	Abû Maqâr	Al-Mansûr	754-775
				Al-Mahdî	775-785
48.	John IV	777-799	Abû Maqâr	Al-Mahdî	775-785
				Al-Hadî	785-786
				Harûn al-Rashîd	786-809
49.	Mark II	799-819	Abû Maqâr	Harûn al-Rashîd	786-809
				Al-Amîn	809-813
				Al-Ma'mûn	813-833
50.	Jacob	819-830	Abû Maqâr	Al-Ma'mûn	813-833
51.	Simon II	830	Abû Maqâr	Al-Ma'mûn	813-833
52.	Joseph	831-849	Abû Maqār	Al-Ma'mûn	813-833
				Al-Mu'tasim	833-842
				Al-Wâthiq	842-847
				Al-Mutawakkil	847-861
53.	Khâîl II	849-851	Abû Yuhinnis	Al-Mutawakkil	847-861
54.	Cosmas II	851-858	Abû Maqâr	Al-Mutawakkil	847-861
55.	Shenute I	859-880	Abû Maqâr	Al-Mutawakkil	847-861
				Al-Muntasir	861-862
				Al-Musta'în	862-866
				Al-Mu'tazz	866-869
				Al-Muhtadî	869-870
				Ahmad ibn Tûlûn	870-881
56.	Khâîl III	880-907	Abû Maqâr	Ahmad ibn Tûlûn	870-881
				Khumarawaîh	881-896
				Gaîsh ibn Khumarawaîh	896

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
56.	Khâîl III	880-907	Abû Maqâr	Hârûn ibn Khumarawaîh	896-904
				Shaîbân ibn Ahmad	904
				Al-Muqtafî	904-908
				Al-Muqtadir	908-932
57.	Gabriel I	910-920	Abû Maqâr	Al-Muqtadir	908-932
58.	Cosmas III	920-932	—	Al-Muqtadir	908-932
59.	Macarius I	932-952	Abû Maqâr	Al-Muhtadî	932-934
				Al-Râdî	935
				Al-Ikhshîd	936-946
				Abû'l-Qâsim Unjur	946-960
60.	Theophanes	952-956	Abû Maqâr	Abû'l-Qâsim Unjur	946-960
61.	Menas II	956-974	Abû Maqâr	Abû'l-Qâsim Unjur	946-960
				Abû'l-Hasan 'Alî	960-966
				Kâfûr	966-968
				Abû'l-Fawâris ibn 'Alî	968-969
				Al-Mu'izz	972-975
62.	Abraham	975-978	Layman	Al-Mu'izz	972-975
				Al-'Azîz	975-996
63.	Philotheus	979-1003	Abû Maqâr	Al-'Azîz	975-996
				Al-Hâkim	996-1021
64.	Zacharia	1004-1032	—	Al-Hâkim	996-1021
				Al-Zâhir	1021-1036
65.	Shenute II	1032-1046	Abû Maqâr	Al-Zâhir	1021-1036
				Al-Mustansir	1036-1094
66.	Christodoulus	1047-1077	al-Barâmûs	Al-Mustansir	1036-1094
67.	Cyril II	1078-1092	Abû Maqâr	Al-Mustansir	1036-1094
68.	Michael IV	1092-1102	Abû Maqâr	Al-Mustansir	1036-1094
			and Dair	Al-Musta'lî	1094-1102
			Singâr	Al-Amir	1102-1130

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
69.	Macarius II	1102-1128	Abû Maqâr	Al-Amir	1102-1130
70.	Gabriel II	1131-1145	Layman	Al-Hâfîz	1130-1149
71.	Michael V	1145-1146	Abû Maqâr	Al-Hâfiz	1130-1149
72.	John V	1147-1166	Abû Yûhannis	Al-Hâfiz	1130-1149
				Al-Zâfir	1149-1154
				Al-Faîz	1154-1160
				Al-'Adid	1160-1171
73.	Mark III	1166-1189	Layman	Al-'Adid	1160-1171
				Salâh al-Dîn	1171-1193
74.	John VI	1189-1216	Layman	Salâh al-Dîn	1171-1193
				Al-'Azîz Imad al-Dîn ('Uthmân)	1193-1198
				Al-Mansûr Muhammad	1198-1200
				Al-'Adil	1200-1218
75.	Cyril III	1235-1243	—	Al-Kâmil	1218-1238
				Al-'Adil II	1238-1239
				Al-Sâlih Najm al-Dîn	1239-1249
76.	Athanasius III	1250-1261	Abú Maqâr	Shagaret al-Durr	1250
				Al-Ashraf Músâ	1250-1254
				'Izz al-Dîn 'Aybak	1254-1257
				Nûr al-Dîn 'Alî	1257-1259
				Saif al-Dîn Kutuz	1260
				Al-Zâhir Baybars	1260-1277
77.	John VII	1262-1268	—	Al-Zâhir Baybars	1260-1277
		1271-1293	—		
78.	Gabriel III	1268-1271	—	Al-Zâhir Baybars	1260-1277
				Baraka Khan	1277-1279
				Salamish	1279

No.	Name			Ruler	Year
78.	Gabriel III	1268-1271	—	Qalâwûn	1279-1290
				Al-Ashraf Khalîl	1290-1293
79.	Theodosius II	1294-1300	Abû Fânah	Al-Nâsir Muhammad	1294
				Al-'Adil Kutbughah	1294-1296
				Husam al-Dîn Lagin	1296-1299
				Al-Nâsir Muhammad	1299-1309
80.	John VIII	1300-1320	Shahrân	Al-Nâsir Muhammad	1299-1309
				Baybars-Jashankir	1309-1310
				Al-Nâsir Muhammad	1310-1341
81.	John IX	1320-1327	—	Al-Nâsir Muhammad	1310-1341
82.	Benjamin II	1327-1339	Gabal Tûrah	Al-Nâsir Muhammad	1310-1341
83.	Peter V	1340-1348	Abû Maqâr	Saif al-Dîn Abû Bakr	1341
				Al-Ashraf Kujuk	1342
				Al-Nâsir Ahmad	1342
				Al-Sâlih Ismail	1342-1345
				Al-Kâmil Sha'bân	1346
				Al-Muzaffar Hâggî	1347
				Al-Nâsir Hasan	1347-1350
84.	Mark IV	1348-1363	Shahrân	Al-Nâsir Hasan	1347-1350
				Al-Sâlih Sâlih	1350-1354
				Al-Nâsir Hasan	1354-1361
				Sâlah al-Dîn Muhammad	1361-1363

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
85.	John X	1363-1369	—	Al-Ashraf Sha'bân	1363-1377
86.	Gabriel IV	1370-1378	al-Muharraq	Al-Ashraf Sha'bân	1363-1377
				'Alâ al-Dîn 'Alî	1377-1381
87.	Matthew I	1378-1408	al-Muharraq	'Alâ al-Dîn 'Alî	1377-1381
				Sâlah al-Dîn Hâggî	1382
				Barqûq	1382-1388
				Al-Nâsir Farag	1388-1405
				Izz al-Dîn 'Abd al-'Aziz	1405
				Al-Nâsir Farag	1405-1412
88.	Gabriel V	1409-1427	al-Qalamûn	Al-Nâsir Farag	1405-1412
				Al-'Adil Must'în Al-Mu'aîyad	1412
				Shaîkh	1412-1421
				Al-Muzaffar Ahmad	1421
				Saîf al-Dîn Tatar	1421
				Nâsir al-Dîn Muhammad	1421-1422
				Al-Ashraf Barsbey	1422-1438
89.	John XI	1427-1452	—	Al-Ashraf Barsbey	1422-1438
				Gamâl al-Dîn Yûsuf	1438
				Jaqmaq	1438-1453
90.	Matthew II	1462-1465	al-Muharraq	Jaqmaq	1438-1453
				Fakhr al-Dîn 'Uthmân	1453
				Saîf al-Dîn Inâl	1453-1460
				Shihab al-Dîn Ahmad	1460
				Saîf al-Dîn Khusqâdam	1460-1467

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
91.	Gabriel VI	1466-1474	Antûnîûs	Saîf al-Dîn Khushqâdam	1460-1467
				Saîf al-Dîn Yalbay	1467
				Timurbugha	1467
				Qâîtbâî	1467-1496
92.	Michael III	1477-1478	—	Qâîtbâî	1467-1496
93.	John XII	1480-1483	al-Muharraq	Qâîtbâî	1467-1496
94.	John XIII	1484-1524	al-Muharraq	Qâîtbâî	1467-1496
				Al-Nâsir Muhammad	1497-1498
				Al-Zâhir Qansûh	1500
				Al-Ashraf Ganbalât	1501
				Al-Ashraf Qansûh al-Ghurî	1501-1516
				Tumân-Baî	1517
				Salîm I	1517-1520
				Sulaîmân I	1522-1566
95.	Gabriel VII	1525-1568	Sûriân	Sulaîmân I	1522-1566
				Salîm II	1566-1574
96.	John XIV	1571-1586	al-Barâmûs	Salîm II	1566-1574
				Murâd III	1574-1595
97.	Gabriel VIII	1587-1603	Bishoî	Murâd III	1574-1595
				Muhammad III	1595-1603
98.	Mark V	1603-1619	Abû Maqâr	Ahmad I	1603-1617
				Mustafâ I	1617-1618
				'Uthmân II	1618-1620

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
99.	John XV	1619-1629	Antûnîûs	'Uthmân II	1618-1620
				Mustafâ I	1620-1623
				Murâd IV	1623-1640
100.	Matthew III	1631-1646	al-Barâmûs, Abû Maqâr	Murâd IV	1623-1640
				Ibrâhîm I	1640-1648
101.	Mark VI	1646-1656	Antûnîûs	Ibrâhîm I	1640-1648
				Muhammad IV	1648-1687
102.	Matthew IV	1660-1675	al-Barâmûs	Muhammad IV	1648-1687
103.	John XVI	1676-1718	Antûnîûs	Muhammad IV	1648-1687
				Sulaîmân II	1687-1691
				Ahmad II	1691-1695
				Mustafâ II	1695-1703
				Ahmad III	1703-1730
104.	Peter VI	1718-1726	Antûnîûs	Ahmad III	1703-1730
105.	John XVII	1727-1745	Antûnîûs-Bûlâ	Ahmad III	1703-1730
				Mahmûd I	1730-1754
106.	Mark VII	1745-1769	Antûnîûs	Mahmûd I	1730-1754
				'Uthmân III	1754-1757
				Mustafâ III	1757-1773
107.	John XVIII	1769-1796	Antûnîûs	Mustafâ III	1757-1773
				'Abd al-Hamîd I	1773-1789
				Salîm III	1789-1805
108.	Mark VIII	1796-1809	Antûnîûs	Muhammad 'Alî	1805-1848
				Salîm III	1789-1805
109.	Peter VII	1809-1852	Antûnîûs	Muhammad 'Alî	1805-1848
				Ibrâhîm	1848
				'Abbâs I	1848-1854
110.	Cyril IV	1854-1861	Antûnîûs	'Abbâs I	1848-1854
				Sa'îd	1854-1863

No.	Name	Year	Monastery	Ruler	Year
111.	Demetrius II	1862-1870	Abû Maqâr	Sa'îd	1854-1863
				Ismâ'îl	1863-1882
112.	Cyril V	1874-1927	al-Barâmûs	Ismâ'îl	1863-1882
				Tawfik	1882-1892
				'Abbâs II	1892-1914
				Hussaîn Kamel	1914-1917
				Fu'âd	1917-1936
113.	John XIX	1928-1942	al-Barâmûs	Fu'âd	1917-1936
				Fârûq	1936-1952
114.	Macarius III	1942-1945	Bishoî	Fârûq	1936-1952
115.	Joseph II	1946-1956	Antûnîûs	Fârûq	1936-1952
				Muhammad Nagîb	1952-1954
				Gamâl 'Abd al-Nâsser	1954-1970
116.	Cyril VI	1959-1971	al-Barâmûs	Gamâl 'Abd al-Nâsser	1954-1970
				Anwar al-Sadat	1970
117.	Shenute III	1971-	Surîân	Anwar al-Sadat	1970

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CHAPTER V.

LIST OF COPTIC METROPOLITANS AND BISHOPS AS OF 1977

No.	Name	Episcopal See	Monastery of origin
1.	Mark	Abû Tîg and Tahta	Abû Tîg
2.	Michael	Asyût and Dair Abû Maqâr	Asyût
3.	Abraham	Fayyûm	Fayyûm
4.	Antonius	Sohâg	Sohâg
5.	Peter	Akhmîm and Saqulta	Akhmîm
6.	Basil	Jerusalem and Middle East	Jerusalem
7.	Menas	Girga and Nag' Hammadi	Girga
8.	Athanasius	Bani Suef and Bahnasa	Bani Suef
9.	Maximus	Qalyubiya and Quweisna	Benha
10.	Domitius	Gizah and Atfih	Gizah
11.	Stephen	Nubia, Umm Durman, Atbara	Umm Durman
12.	Luke	Manfalût and Abnûb	Manfalût
13.	Agapius	Dairût and Dair Mawâs	Dairût
14.	Mácarius	Qena, Qûs, Red Sea	Qena
15.	Paul	Helwân and Ma'sara	Helwân
16.	Daniel	Khartûm and South Africa	Khartûm
17.	Philip	Daqahliya and Mit Damsîs	Mansurah
18.	John	Gharbiya	Tanta

No.	Name	Episcopal See	Monastery of origin
19.	Pachomius	Beheira, Maryût, Pentapolis	Damanhûr
20.	Bishoi	Damietta and Dair Sitt Dimiana	Damietta
21.	Hadra	Aswân, Kom Ombo, Edfu	Aswân
22.	Wissa	Balyanâ, Abû Rudeis	Balyanâ
23.	Poemen	Mallawî, Ashmunain	Mallawî
24.	Arsenius	Minya and Abû Qurqâs	Minya
25.	Paphnutius	Samalût	Samalût
26.	Benjamin	Menufiya	Shibin al-Kom
27.	Angelus	Sharqiya	Zaqaziq
28.	Theodore	Port Said and Canal Zone	Port Said
29.	Samuel	Public, Oecumenical Affairs	Cairo
30.	Gregorius	Theological Education	Cairo
31.	Antonius	African Affairs	Nairobi
32.	Ishaq	Cairo	Cairo

LIST OF GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLITANS AND BISHOPS OF THE ALEXANDRIAN PATRIARCHATE (1977)

No.	Name	Rank	See	Address
1.	Nicodemus	Metr.	Leontopolis	Ismailia, Egypt
2.	Synesius	Metr.	Nubia	Khartum, Sudan
3.	Parthenius	Metr.	Carthage	Tripoli, Libya
4.	Timotheus	Metr.	Central Africa	Lubumbashi, Congo
5.	Trineus	Metr.	Accra, West Africa	Yaounde, Cameroun
6.	Barnabas	Metr.	Pelusium	Port Said, Egypt
7.	Paul	Metr.	Hermopolis	Tanta, Egypt
8.	Paul	Metr	Ioannoupolis	Johannesburg, South Africa
9.	Cyril	Metr.	Rhodesia	Salisbury, Rhodesia
10.	Paul	Metr.	Cape of Good Hope	Cape Town, South Africa
11.	Methodius	Metr.	Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
12.	Frumentius	Metr.	Eirenoupolis	Dar al-Salam, Tanzania
13.	Dionysius	Metr.	Memphis	Cairo, Egypt
14.	Petros	Bishop	Babylon	Cairo, Egypt
15.	Theocletos	Bishop	Heliopolis,	Cairo, Egypt
16.	Chrysostomo	Bishop	Nicopolis	Alexandria

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIAN FEASTS AND CALENDARS

1. CALENDARS IN USE IN EGYPT

One of the many adjustments which Westerners face in the Orient is the necessary recognition of numerous calendars which are observed by the people of the Orient.

In Egypt there are altogether four calendar systems in use: The Coptic, the Islamic (Higri), the Julian Gregorian and the Gregorian. To begin with the Islamic one, the Muslim era commences on the 15th or the 16th of July, 622 A.D. This date does not exactly coincide with the date of Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina, for it was fixed by 'Umar in such a way that the year begins in Muharram. The Coptic Church begins its era on the 29th of August, 284 A.D., which is termed the « Era of the Martyrs » (A.M.) and which commemorates the martyrs who suffered and died for the Christian faith during the Diocletian persecution. According to reckoning by the Gregorian Calendar, the Coptic Year begins on September 11th, or on the 12th in the years prior to the Gregorian Leap Years. Thus the « Era of the Martyrs » marks the official beginning of Coptic history. The Julian-Gregorian Calendar is used by the Greek Orthodox. The Gregorian Calendar resulted from a correction of the Julian Calendar by Aloysius Lilius and was introduced into the Western Church by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582.

The Greek Orthodox Church adopted the Gregorian Calendar in 1924, yet still uses the Julian Calendar for calculating the Easter date which is arrived at by the following formula. Subtract 2 from the number of the year and divide

by 19. Multiply the remainder by 11 and divide by 30. The remainder « e » is called the epakte and is supposed to give the age of the moon on the 31st of December of the preceding year. The date of the Easter full moon is given by 44 — « e », if « e » is not greater than 23 (the date then means March) and by 43 — « e », if « e » is greater than 23 (the date then means April). The Sunday following it is Easter in the Julian Calendar.

Example for 1971 : 1971 — 2 = 1969. 1969 : 19 = 103, remainder 12. 12 × 11 = 132. 132 : 30 = 4, remainder 12. 12 < 23, therefore, 44 — 12 = March 32 equals April 1. 1st of April plus 13 (the difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendar) = April 14. The following Sunday is April 18, the date on which the Greek Orthodox celebrate Easter in 1971.

This, of course, is based upon the fact that 19 Julian years are approximately equal to 235 lunar months, so that after 19 years the dates of the full moons are repeated. This is only approximate and induces an error of five days today.

Catholics and Protestants use a more precise method of calculating the epakte. In essence they add 21 to the Greek epakte and subtract 30 if possible which has an error only of one day. So that, if between March 21 Gregorian and March 21 Julian a full moon occurs, the Western Christians count it, whereas the Greek Orthodox Christians do not, and wait for the following one, hence a difference of more than one month. If no full moon occurs in these 13 days, then either Easter day coincides, or — owing to the five day error of the East, the Eastern Easter is one week after Western Easter. As a result, Western Easter may be as early as March 22, whereas Eastern Easter may be as late as May 8, which will happen in 1983.

In addition, there is the Armenian calendar, which has a limited usage by the Armenian Church. The Armenian calendar commences with the year 552 A.D. This date was fixed by Moses II, Catholicus of Echmiadzin, and confirmed by the Second Council of Dvin in 551 A.D.

2. THE CALENDAR OF THE COPTIC CHURCH

The development of the Christian Calendar in general, and of the Coptic Martyrology in particular, was a reflection of the historical atmosphere in which the Christian Church lived during the first four centuries. The successive persecutions of the Christians produced an ever increasing number of martyrs, whose steadfastness and perseverance was considered an inspiration, and whose death for the Faith called for an annual commemoration by the Church.

The earliest instance of such a commemoration comes from Asia Minor, in a letter written in 156 A.D. by the Christians of Smyrna to the neighbouring Church of Philomelium. This epistle, of which Eusebius has preserved the greater part, is important, because we derive from it all our information with regard to St. Polycarp's martyrdom. The Martyrium Polycarpi mentions that, after the martyrdom of the bishop, the faithful collected his ashes which they valued more than precious stones, and laid them in a suitable place, where they could assemble and worship, in order to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom. The Early Church, which was eschatologically minded, saw in the martyrdom of one of her members his birthday, the *natalitia* or *genethlion ;* and it is only in the fourth century, that the *martyrium* becomes *depositio* or burial. As Dom Gregory Dix points out « the earthly, not heavenly, event is now (4th cent.), the object of the liturgical celebration ; time and earthly history, not eternity, have become the primary interest of the Calendar » (1).

During the fourth and fifth century, there is already a skeleton form of commemorations which relate to the more important events in the Life of Christ and to the martyrdoms of the Saints. One of the first commemorations in Alexandria was probably that of the Manifestation of Christ, the *Theophania* (11th of Tûbah), which may have originated as

(1) Dix, G., *The Shape of the Liturgy,* Dacre Press, Westminster, 1945, p. 369.

early as the late second century. The Consecration of the Church of the Resurrection (16th of Tût) is mentioned by the pilgrim Etheria, the Spanish nun, who visited Jerusalem in 385 A.D., and the commemorations of St. John the Evangelist (4th of Tûbah), and St. Stephen (1st of Tûbah) also originated in Jerusalem, somewhere in the 4th and 5th century. The Massacre of the Holy Innocents (3rd of Tûbah) was observed in North Africa in the 5th century, and the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul (5th of Abîb) is mentioned in the 4th century Roman *Depositiones*.

As regards the contents of the Calendar, we have evidence that, in addition to the See of Jerusalem which exercised great liturgical influence from the fourth century onwards, the various ecclesiastical centres and areas developed their own local martyrology and hagiology. For instance, the migratory Goths, the Celts, Gauls and others, each had their proper calendar. This, in the course of time, was gradually enlarged through borrowing from other church calendars. It thus comes about, that certain commemorations were observed in one part of the Christian world, without necessarily being accepted or observed in another part. The general and local calendars of the Western Church are a good example of this phenomenon.

The Alexandrian Martyrology or Coptic Synaxarium evolved from such a local martyrology towards a more general calendar, only, however, to return again later to its local tradition. This process is evident from its inclusion of Greek, Syrian, Armenian, Roman and Persian bishops, saints and martyrs, who were added during the second stage of its evolution. To understand the formation of the Synaxarium we must keep in mind this evolutionary development which began in the fourth and the fifth century. We have manuscript evidence for the existence of Coptic Martyrologies, which provided the material for the Arabic version of the Synaxarium (1). It is, however, with this Arabic version that the present study is concerned.

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(1) Hyvernat H., *Les Actes des Martyrs de l'Egypte*, Paris, 1886-1887.

The first Arabic recension is attributed to Peter Severus al Gamîl, Bishop of Malîg (12th-13th cent.). This was followed by a recension made by Michael, Bishop of Atrîb and Malîg (1243-1247) (1). That this evolution of the Synaxarium has continued, even to the present day, is evident from the additional commemorations which are found in the 1912 and 1936 editions of this work. Here we have, for example, the commemorations of Anbâ Farîg, known as Anbâ Rûwaîs (1404), of Gabriel VII (1525-1568), of John XVI (1676-1718), of Cyril IV (1852-1861), of Demetrius II (1862-1870), of Cyril V (1874-1928) and of John XIX (1928-1942).

The Synaxarium, therefore, through its development, bears constant witness to the life of the Coptic Church, militant and triumphant.

(1) Burmester, O.H.E. KHS, « On the Date and Authorship of the Arabic Synaxarium of the Coptic Church », *JTS*, 39, 1938, pp. 249-253; Graf, « Zur Autorschaft des Arabischen Synaxars der Kopten », *Orientalia*, IX 1940, 3, pp. 240-243.

Copt. (1)	Jul. (2)	Greg. (3)	Commemorations (4)	Sources (5)
Tût	*August*	*September*		
1	29	11 (6)	1) New Year's Day (Nîrûz).	ABDEFGHJ
			2) Job (Ayûb) took a bath and was healed.	ACDEFGHJ
			3) Bartholomew (Bartulûmâûs), *Apost.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			4) Milius (Mîlîûs), *4th Patr.*	ABDEGHJ
			Sabellius, *4th Patr*	F

(1) Copt = Coptic Calendar.

(2) Jul = Julian Calendar.

(3) Greg = Gregorian Calendar.

(4) The variations of the spelling of proper names may often be due to a faulty insertion of diacritical points in Arabic. Unless otherwise indicated, the abbreviation « *Patr.* » stands for « Patriarch of the See of Mark (Alexandria) ».

(5) A = *Synaxarium of the Egyptian Orthodox Church.* 2 vols. Cairo : Ahliah al-Hadashia, 1936. (Patriarchal Imprimatur, Feb. 23, 1935).

B = *Kitâb al-Sadîq al-Amîn.* (Synaxarium), 2 vols. Cairo : 1912. (Patriarchal Imprimatur, Sept. 25, 1912).

C = Malan, S. C., *The Calendar of the Coptic Church.* (Translated from an Arabic MS.). London : D. Nutt. 1873.

D = Basset, R., MS. A, No. 256 (XVIth cent.), « Le Synaxaire Arabe Jacobite ». *Patrologia Orientalis,* I, III, XI, XVI, XVII.

E = Basset, R., MS. B. No. 4869-4870 (XIVth cent.), « Le Synaxaire Arabe Jacobite ». *Patrologia Orientalis,* I, III, XI, XVI, XVII. This recension was compiled in the Monastery of Benhadab (XIIth-XIVth cent.), and became known as the Theban recension.

F = Wuestenfeld, H.F., *Synaxarium, das ist Heiligen Kalender,* Gotha, 1879. (The first six months only).

G = Ludolf, H.. *Commentarius ad suam historiam Aethiopicam,* Frankfurt, 1691.

H = Assemani, S.E., *Bibl. Med. Laurent. et Palat. codd. mss. orient catal.,* Florence, 1742.

J (7) = Mai, A., *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio,* Rome, 1825 f.

(6) In Leap Years, however, the 1st Tût falls on September 12th, since the additional day is added to the month Nasî of the preceding Coptic Year. In consequence, all the above commemorations up to and including February 29th, are advanced by one day according to the Gregorian and Julian Calendar. Thereafter, the dates are the same as in the non-Leap Years, *i.e.* the 22nd Amshîr falls on March 1st, Gregorian Calendar.

(7) The letter J is intentionally used here instead of the letter I in order to avoid confusion with the Roman numeral 1.

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Tût	*August*	*September*		
2	30	12	1) John the Baptist (Yûhannâ al-Ma'madân), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Dâsîâh the soldier of Tandâ, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
3	31	13	1) Assembly of Council at Alexandria under the Presidency of Dionysius (Dîûnâsîûs), *14th Patr.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Great Earthquake in Old Cairo (Misr al-Qadîmah) and Cairo (al-Qâhirah) in 1112 A.D.	ABCDEFGHJ
	September			
4	1	14	1) Macarius (Makârîûs), *69th Patr.*	ABCDEFGHJ
5	2	15	1) Sophia (Sûfîâh), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Mama (Mâmâ).	EFG
6	3	16	1) Isaiah (Isha'îâ), *Proph., Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Basilissa (Bâshilîlîat), *Mart.*	AEG
7	4	17	1) Dioscorus (Dîsqûrus), *25th Patr.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Agathon (Aghâtû), Peter (Butrus), John (Yûhannâ), Amon (Amûn), Amona (Amûnâ) and their mother Rebecca (Rifqah), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Severian (Sûrîânûs) of Gabala, *Bishop.*	ABCDEFGHJ
8	5	18	1) Zacharias (Zakarîâ), *Prophet.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Moses (Mûsâ), *Prophet.*	ABDEFGHJ
			3) Diomedes (Dîmidîs), *Mart.* Datmadalus, *Mart.*	C

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Tût	*September*	*September*		
9	6	19	1) Pisora (Bîsûrah), *Bishop* and *Mart.*	ABDEFGHJ
			Syra, *Mart.*	C
			2) Miracle of Colassae in Phrygia.	E
10	7	20	1) Matrona (Matrûnat), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Bâsîn and her three children.	ABCDEHJ
			3) Abumakar.	C
			4) The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	DEFGHJ
11	8	21	1) Basilides (Wâsîlîdis), Mart.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Cornelius (Qurnîlyîûs) the Centurion.	E
			3) Theodora (Taûdhûrah).	E
12	9	22	1) Assembly at Ephesus of the Third Council in 431 A D.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Translation of the relics of Clement (Klîmans) and his companions, *Mart.*	ABDEFGHJ
			3) Michael, *Archangel.*	FG
13	10	23	1) Matthew (Mattâûs), *Patr.*	A
			2) Miracle worked by St. Basil (Bâsîlîûs).	ABCDEFGHJ
14	11	24	1) Agathon (Aghâtûn) the Stylite, *Conf.*	ABCDEFHJ
15	12	25	1) Translation of the relics of Stephen (Istafânûs), chief of the deacons.	ACEGF
			2) Stephen (Istafânûs), *Mart.*	BDGHJ
			3) Leontius (Lûndîânus) of Syria.	BD
16	13	26	1) Consecration of the Church of the Resurrection (Holy Sepulchre).	ABCDEFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Tût	*September*	*September*		
			2) Translation of the relics of John Chrysostom (Yûhannâ Fûm al-Dhahab).	AB
17	14	27	1) Invention of the Holy Cross.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Theognosta (Tâûghnustâ), *Nun.*	ABCDEFHJ
18	15	28	1) Porphyrius (Barfûrîûs), *Mart.*	ABCF
			2) Stephen (Istafânûs) and Niceta (Nûkîtâ), *Mart.*	ABDEHJ
			3) Mercurius (Marqûrîûs), *Mart.*	DEFHJ
19	16	29	1) Gregory (Ighrîghûrîûs), *Patr. of Armenia.*	ABCDEFHJ
20	17	30	1) Athanasius (Athanâsîûs), *28th Patr.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Melitina (Malâtînâ), *Virg.*	ABEFG
			3) Theopista (Tâûbistâ), *Nun.*	ABEF
			4) Blessed Virgin Mary.	G
		October		
21	18	1	1) Monthly Commemoration of the Holy Virgin Mary.	AF
			2) Cyprian (Qibrîânûs), *Bishop of Carthage,* and Justina (Yûstînah), *Nun.*	ABCDEFGHJ
22	19	2	1) Cotylas (Kûbatalâs) and his sister Axua (Aksûâ) and his friend Tâtus, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Julius (Yûlîûs) al-Aqfahs, *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
23	20	3	1) Eunapius (Aûnabîûs) and Andrew (Andarâûs), *Mart.*	ABDEFHJ
			Vetanius and Andraeus.	C
			2) Thecla (Taklâ), *Mart.*	ABDEGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Tût	*September*	*October*		
			3) Opening of the Church of the Blessed Virgin in the Hârat al-Rûm (Cairo) after its closure.	AB
24	21	4	1) Gregory (Ighrîghûrîûs), *Monk.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Quadratus (Qadarâtus) one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABDEFHJ
			3) Gregory (Ighrîghûrîûs), Thaumaturgus.	B
25	22	5	1) Jonah (Yûnâs), *Proph.*	ABCDEFHJ
26	23	6	1) Annunciation of the Angel to Zacharias (Zakharîâ) concerning John the Baptist.	ABCDEFGHJ
27	24	7	1) Eustathius (Astâthîûs) and his two sons, Mart.	ABCDEFGHJ
28	25	8	1) Apater (Abâdîr) and his sister Irene (Irânî), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
29	26	9	1) Repsima (Arabsîmâ) and Gaiana (Ghânâ) and her virgin sisters, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Commemoration of the Birth and Resurrection of Christ.	F
30	27	10	1) The great miracle which the Lord performed with Athanasius (Athanâsîûs) the Isapostolic.	ABCDEFGHJ
Bâbah				
1	28	11	1) Anastasia (Anastâsîat), *Mart.* and *Virg.*	ABCDEFGHJ
2	29	12	1) Arrival of Severus (Sawîrus), *Patr. of Antioch,* at the Egyptian Monasteries.	ABCDEFGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Bâbah	*September*	*October*		
3	30	13	1) Simon II (Sîmâûn), *51st Patr.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Theodora (Thâûdhûrâ), daughter of Arcadius.	BCDEFGHJ
			3) John (Yûhannâ) the soldier, *Mart.*	B
			4) Gregory, *Bp. of Armenia.*	CDEFGHJ
	October			
4	1	14	1) Bacchus (Wâkhus), companion of Sergius (Sargîûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
5	2	15	1) Paul (Bûlus), *Patr. of Constantinople, Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
6	3	16	1) Hannah, Prophetess and mother of Samuel (Samwîl) the Prophet.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Antony, *Bishop of Banâ, Mart.*	CF
7	4	17	1) Paul (Bûlâ) at-Tammûah, *Conf.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Menas (Mînâ) and Hâsinâ, *Mart.*	DEFHJ
8	5	18	1) Matrâ, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Her (Hûr), Susanna (Sûsanâ) and her children, *Mart.*	ABDEFJ
			3) Agathon (Agâthûn), *Solitary.*	ABDEFJ
9	6	19	1) Eumenius (Aûmânîûs), *7th Patr.*	ABF
			2) Eclipse of the sun in the year 958 A.M., 1242, A.D.	ABCDFHJ
			3) Simeon (Sama'ân), *Bp.*	ADEFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Hâtûr	*October*	*November*		
			4) Liberius (Lîbarîûs), *Pope of Rome.*	BCDEFGJ
			Honorius.	H
10	7	20	1) Sergius (Sargîûs) companion of Bacchus (Wâkhus), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Eumenius, *7th Patr.*	C
11	8	21	1) James (Ya'qûb), ***Patr. of Antioch, Conf.***	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Pelagia (Bîlâgîah), *Virg.*	ABCDEFHJ
12	9	22	1) Demetrius I (Dîmitrîûs), ***12th Patr.***	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Matthew (Mattâûs) the Evangelist, ***Mart.***	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Monthly commemoration of Michael, *Archangel.*	ABF
13	10	23	1) Zachariah (Zakaryâ), ***Monk.***	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Abtalâmon and his brothers.	G
14	11	24	1) Philip (Fîlibus) of Caesarea, one of the seven deacons.	ABDEFGHJ
			2) Philas of Caesarea.	C
15	12	25	1) Panteleemon (Bandalîîmûn), *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
16	13	26	1) Agathon (Agathûn), *39th Patr.*	ABDEFGHJ
			2) Carpus (Kârbûs), Papylus (Abûlalûs), Peter (Butrus), disciples of Isaiah (Isha'ya) the Hermit.	ABDEFJ
			3) Achillas, *18th Patr.*	C
17	14	27	1) Dioscorus II (Dîusqûrus), ***31st Patr.***	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Gregory (Ighrighûrîûs) of Nyssa.	BDEFGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Hâtûr	*October*	*November*		
18	15	28	1) Theophilus (Thâûfîlus), *23rd Patr.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Heraclidus, *13th Patr.*	G
19	16	29	1) Council at Antioch against Paul of Samosata.	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Theophilus (Thâûfîlus) and his wife, *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
			3) Bartholomew.	G
20	17	30	1) John the Short (Yûânnis al-Qasîr), *Conf.*	ABCDEFGHJ
21	18	31	1) Monthly Commemoration of the Holy Virgin Mary.	ABDFGHJ
			2) Translation of the relics of Lazarus (al-'Azar).	ABCDEFHJ
			3) Joel (Yûîîl), *Proph.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			4) Farîg (Anbâ Rûwaîs) 1404 A.D.	AB
			5) Enthronement of Anbâ Kîrillus V.	B
		November		
22	19	1	1) Luke (Lûqâ) the Evangelist, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
23	20	2	1) Joseph (Yûsâb), *52nd Patr.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Dionysius (Dîûnîsîûs), Bp. of Corinth, *Mart.* and Maximianus (Maksimîânûs).	ABDEFGHJ
24	21	3	1) Hilarion (Aîlârîûn), who introduced monasticism into Palestine.	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Paul (Bûlus), Longinus (Langînûs), Dînah, *Mart.*	ABDGHJ
			3) Martha.	G
			4) Irene.	F

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Bâbah	*October*	*November*		
25	22	4	1) Apip (Abîb), Apollo (Abullû), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of St. Julius (Yûlîûs) of Aqfahs in Alexandria.	ABE
26	23	5	1) Timon (Tîmûn) one of the 70 disciples.	ABDEFHJ
			Thomas.	C
			2) The Seven Martyrs of Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs.	AB
			3) James, brother of Christ.	G
27	24	6	1) Macarius (Makârîûs), Bp. of Tkoou (Adkû), *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
28	25	7	1) Marcian (Markîânûs) and Mercurius (Markûrîûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
29	26	8	1) Demetrius (Dîmitrîûs) of Thessalonica, *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Nativity of Jesus Christ.	G
30	27	9	1) Consecration of the Church of St. Mark the Evangelist and the manifestation of his head.	ABC
			2) Abraham (Ibrâhîm), the solitary of Memphis.	ABCDEFHJ
Hâtûr				
1	28	10	1) Maximus (Maksîmûs), Numitius (Nûmîtîus), Victor (Buqtur), Philip (Fîlîbûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Cleopas (Kalîûbâs) the Apostle and his companion.	ABF
2	29	11	1) Peter (Butrus), *27th Patr.*	ABCDFGHJ
3	30	12	1) Cyriacus (Kîrîâkûs), Ascete.	ABCDFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Hâtûr	*October*	*November*		
			2) Athanasius (Athânâsîûs) and his sister Eirene (Iîrînî).	ABDEFHJ
4	31	13	1) John (Yûhannâ), James (Ya'qûb), Bishops in Persia, *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Epimachus (Abîmâkhus), Gordianus (Ghardyânûs), Adrianus ('Azârîânûs) of Rome, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Thomas (Tûmâs) of Damascus, *Mart.*	BCDEFHJ
	November			
5	1	14	1) Manifestation of the head of Longinus (Langînûs) the Soldier	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Timothy, (Tîmûthâûs), or Thomasius (Tûmânîûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Translation of the body of Theodore (Tâdrus) the General to Shutb.	ABDFHJ
6	2	15	1) Felix (Fîlikus), *Pope of Rome.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of the Holy Virgin Mary in the Dair al-Muharraq.	ABDEFHJ
7	3	16	1) George (Gaûrgîûs) of Alexandria, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Nehroua (Nahrûh), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGJ
			3) Menas (Mînâ), *Bp. of Tmaî.*	ABCDEFHJ
			4) Consecration of the Church of St. George of Cappadocia.	ABCDEFHJ
			5) Lucius.	H

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Hâtûr	*November*	*November*		
8	4	17	1) The Four Bodiless Living Creatures, *Apoc. IV : 6-7.*	ABCDEFGHJ
9	5	18	1) Isaac (Iisâak), *41st Patr.*	ABCDFGHJ
			2) Assembly of the Holy Council of Nicaea.	ABCDFGHJ
			3) Anonymous Saint of the desert.	E
10	6	19	1) Fifty Virgins and their mother Sophia (Sûfîah), *Mart.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Assembly of a Council at Rome on account of Epiphany and Lent.	ABCDFHJ
			3) Markyâ of Alexandria.	DFGHJ
11	7	20	1) Anne (Hannah), Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	ABCDFHJ
			2) Archelaus (Arkhîlâûs) and Elisha (Alîsha'), *Hegoumenos and Prophet.*	ABDFHJ
			3) Amonius (Amûnîûs), *Bishop of Aswân.*	E
12	8	21	1) Michael, *Archangel.*	ABCDEFGHJ
13	9	22	1) Timothy (Tîmaûthâûs), *Bishop of Antinoe* (Ansinâ).	ABCDFGHJ
			2) Zacharias (Zakhârîâs), *64th Patr.*	ABDFHJ
			3) Gabriel (Gabrâîîl), *Archangel.*	B
			4) Joseph (Yûsâb) of Mount al-Asâs.	E
14	10	23	1) Martin (Martînûs), *Bishop of Tours (Tharâkî).*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Hanania, Azaria, Mezak.	C
			3) Matrona (Madrûnah).	E
			4) Michael, *Archangel.*	G

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Hâtûr	*November*	*November*		
15	11	24	1) Menas (Mînâ) Thaumaturgus, *Mart.*	ABDEGHJ
			2) Autumna, *Mart.*	C
			3) Menas II (Mînâ), *61st Patr.*	F
16	12	25	1) Fast of the Nativity.	ABDFHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of St. Onuphrius.	ABCDFGHJ
			3) Justus (Yustus), *Bp., Mart.*	ABDFHJ
			Castus.	C
			4) Houb (Hûb) of Tûkh.	E
17	13	26	1) John Chrysostom (Yûhanna Fum al-Dhahab).	ABCDFGHJ
			2) Paul (Bûlus) *Monk.*	E
			3) Coordination of Alexandrian calendars.	DFJ
18	14	27	1) Atrasis (Adrûsîs) and Junia (Yûannâ), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Philip (Fîlibus) the Apostle, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
19	15	28	1) Consecration of the Church of SS. Sergius (Sargîûs) and Bacchus (Wâkhus).	ABCDFHJ
			2) Commemoration of the Preaching of St. Bartholomew (Barthûlamâûs) the Apostle.	ABCDGHJ
			3) Beginning of the Fast of the Nativity with the Westerners.	BJ
			4) Anonymous old Saint of Sa'îd.	E
			5) Xenophon, John, Arcadius, Matthias.	F

Hâtûr	*November*	*November*		
20	16	29	1) Anianus (Anîânûs), *2nd Patr.*	ABCDFGHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of Theodore the General, son of John (Yûannâ) Ashatbî.	ABCGJ
			3) Sophronius (Sufrûnîûs), Shânâzhûm, *Mart.*	E
			4) Matthew, *Apostle,* Athanasius, *20th Patr.*	G
21	17	30	1) Monthly Commemoration of the Holy Virgin Mary.	A
			2) Gregory (Ighrîghûrîûs), Thaumaturgus.	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Cosmas (Quzmâ), *44th Patr.*	ABCDFHJ
			4) Alphaeus (Halfâû), Zacchaeus (Zakârû), Romanus (Rûmânûs), John (Yûannâ), Mart.	ABDFHJ
			5) Victor (Buqtur), Thomas (Tûmâ), Isaac (Ishaq) of al-Ashmunain.	ABDFHJ
			6) John (Yuhannis) of Asyût.	E
		December		
22	18	1	1) Cosmas (Quzmân), Damian (Damîân), and their brother Antîmûs, Leontius (Lândîûs), Euprapius (Abrâbîûs), and their mother Theodota (Thâûbhûtî), *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
23	19	2	1) Cornelius (Kurnîlîûs) the Centurion.	ABCDEFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.		Commemorations	Sources
Hâtûr	*November*	*December*			
23	19	2	2)	Translation of the relics of St. Marina to the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Hârat al-Rûm.	ABE
			3)	Joel, *Proph.*	G
24	20	3	1)	The Twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse.	ABCDEFGHJ
25	21	4	1)	Mercurius (Marqûrîûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
26	22	5	1)	Valerian (Bâlârîânûs) and his brother Thiburin (Thîbûrînûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2)	Gregory (Ighrîghurîûs) of Nyssa.	ABDEFGHJ
27	23	6	1)	James (Ya'qûb) the Sawn-asunder, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2)	Consecration of the Church of St. Victor (Buqtur).	AE
			3)	Philemon.	G
28	24	7	1)	Sarapamon (Sarâbâmûn), *Bishop of Nikiou, Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
29	25	8	1)	Peter (Butrus), *17th Patr., Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2)	Clement (Aklîmanadûs) of Rome, *Mart.*	ABCDFGHJ
			3)	Annunciation, Nativity and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.	F
30	26	9	1)	Acacius (Akâkîûs), *Patr. of Constantinople.*	ABCDFHJ
			2)	Macarius (Maqârîûs), *Mart.*	ABDFHJ
			3)	Consecration of the Church of SS. Cosmas and Damian and their sister and their mother.	ABDFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Hâtûr	*November*	*December*		
			4) Victor (Buqtur).	E
Kîhak				
1	27	10	1) Peter (Butrus) of Edessa, *Bishop.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of St. Shenute, (Shanûdah).	ABFJ
2	28	11	1) Apa Hor (Abâ Hûr), *Monk.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Harman, *Bishop of Qaû.*	CE
3	29	12	1) Entry of the Blessed Virgin Mary into the Temple in Jerusalem (The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary).	ABCDEFGHJ
4	30	13	1) Andrew (Andarâûs) the Apostle and brother of Peter, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Bishoi.	F
	December			
5	1	14	1) Nahum (Nâhûm), *Prophet.*	ABCDFGHJ
			2) Victor (Buqtur), *Mart.*	AE
			3) Isidore (Isîdhûrus), *Mart.*	ABFGHJ
6	2	15	1) Batalus (Bâtalus), *Mart.*	AB
			2) Abraham (Abrâm), *62nd Patr.*	ABCDFHJ
			3) Anatolus (Anatis), *Mart.*	DFGHJ
			4) Anonymous female Saint.	E
7	3	16	1) Matthew the Poor (Mattâ al-Maskîn).	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Enthronement of John XIX (Yûánis) *113th Patr.*	A
			3) Bâninâ and Bânâû, *Mart.*	E
			4) Dermatâûs of al-Bahnasâ.	E
			5) John (Yûhannâ), *Bishop of Ermont.*	E

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Kîhak	*December*	*December*		
8	4	17	1) Heracles (Yârâklâs), *13th Patr.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Barbara (Barbârah) and Juliana (Yûlîânah), *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
			3) Paisus (Iîsa) (Paisa) and Thecla (Taklâ) his sister, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			4) Samuel (Samwîl), Hegoumenos of Dair al-Qalamûn.	ABCDEFHJ
9	5	18	1) Poemen (Bîmîn), *Conf.*	ABDEFHJ
			2) Namin.	C
10	6	19	1) Translation of the relics of Severus (Sâwîrus), *Patr.* of Antioch, to the al-Zugâg (Ennaton nr. Alexandria).	ABCDFHJ
			2) Nicholas (Niqûlâûs), *Bishop of Myra, Conf.*	ABCDFGHJ
			3) Shûrah of Shinchîf, *Mart.*	E
			4) Theophanes (Tâûfânîûs), *60th Patr.*	D
11	7	20	1) Pidjimi (Bîgîmî), *Ascete.*	ABDEFGHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of St. Claudius (Aklûdius).	B
			3) Benjamin of Phasia.	C
			4) Ptolemaeus (Abtulumâûs), *Mart.*	E
12	8	21	1) Monthly Commemoration of Michael, *Archangel.*	AFJ
			2) Hadra (Hadrâ). *Bishop of Aswân.*	ABDEFHJ
			3) John (Yûhannâ), *Conf.*	ABDF
			4) Assembly of the Council at Rome against Novatus (Nubâtus).	ABCDFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Kîhak	*December*	*December*		
13	9	22	1) Barsanuphius (Barshanûfîûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Apraxius (Abrâkîûs), *Ascete.*	ABCDFHJ
			3) Consecration of the Church of St. Misayil (Mîsâîîl).	ABDFHJ
			4) Elias (Îîlyâs) of Samhûd.	E
			5) Mârî Zalî, Disciple of Marî Mattâ.	E
			6) Christodoulos (Akristûdûlûs) of 'Ain Shams.	D
14	10	23	1) Behnam (Bihnâm) and his sister Sarah (Sârah), *Mart.*	ABDF
			2) Christodoulus, (Akhristûdhûlûs), *Ascete.*	AB
			3) Apa Hor (Abâ Hûr) and Apa Mena (Abâ Mînâ) the Elders, *Mart.*	ABCDF
			4) Amonius (Amûnîûs), *Bp. of Esna* (Latopolis).	AE
			5) Christodoulus (Akhristûdhûlûs) *66th Patr.*	D
			6) Ezekiel (Hiziqyâl), *Ascete.*	E
			7) Simeon (Sama'ân), *New Mart.*	ABCDFGHJ
15	11	24	1) Gregory (Ighrîghûrîûs), *Patr. of Armenia, Conf.*	ABCDFGHJ
			2) Luke (Lûqâs) *the Stylite.*	BCDFHJ
			3) Amsâh al-Qîftî, *Mart.*	E
			4) Asbah, *Mart.*	D
16	12	25	1) Gideon (Gad'aûn), one of the Judges.	ABCDFHJ
			2) Harouadj (Harûâg), Ananias (Hanânîâ), Khousi (Khûzî) of Akhmîm, *Mart.*	ABDFJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Kîhak	*December*	*December*		
16	12	25	3) Consecration of the Church of St. James (Ya'qûb) the Persian.	AB
			4) Eulogius (Aûlûdhîûs) and Arsenius (Arsânîûs), *Mart.*	E
17	13	26	1) Luke (Lûqâ) the Stylite and the translation of his relics.	ABCDFHJ
			2) Elias (Iîlyâs), *Ascete.*	E
			3) Sarapamon.	G
18	14	27	1) Translation of the relics of Titus (Tîtus) to Constantinople.	ABCDFHJ
			2) Heracleas (Yàrâklâs), *Mart.*, Philemon (Fîlîmûn), *Priest.*	ABDFGHJ
			3) Anonymous desert monk.	E
19	15	28	1) John (Yûhannâ), Bp. of Burulius and Compiler of the *Synaxarium.*	ABCDEFHJ
20	16	29	1) Haggai (Haggî), *Prophet.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Elias (Hâlyâs), *Bishop of al-Muharraq.*	E
			3) Pisentius (Bisantâûs).	E
21	17	30	1) Monthly Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	AFGH
			2) Barnabas (Barnâbâ), one of the Seventy, *Mart.*	ABCDFHJ
			3) Samuel (Samwîl).	E
22	18	31	1) Gabriel (Ghabrîâl) and the consecration of his church in Caesarea.	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Anastasius (Anastâsîûs), *36th Patr.*	ABCDFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Kîhak	*December*	*December*		
			3) Barnabas (Nâbis), *Bishop of Aidâb.*	E
			4) Macarius II, *69th Patr.*	F
		January		
23	19	1	1) David (Dâûd), *Prophet.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Timothy (Tîmûtâûs), *Hermit.*	ABCDFHJ
			3) The nephew of the king of Nubia.	E
24	20	2	1) Ignatius (Ighnâtîûs), *Patr. of Antioch, Mart.*	ABCDFGHJ
			2) Philogonis (Fîlûghûnîûs), *Patr. of Antioch.*	ABCDFHJ
			3) The Nativity of Takla Haymanot (Takla Hîmânût) the Ethiopian.	AB
			4) Martyrs of Bûla and of Salfânâ.	E
25	21	3	1) John the Black (Yûhannâ Kâmâ), *Ascete.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Bishai (Abû Abchâi) of al-Qabrin.	E
26	22	4	1) Anastasia (Anastâsîâh), *Mart.*	ABCDFGHJ
			2) Juliana (Yuliânâ), *Mart.*	ABDFHJ
			3) Consecration of the Church of Anbâ Bishoî.	B
			4) Heraklion (Harâkîûn), *Bishop.*	E
27	23	5	1) Psote (Bisâdi), Bishop of Psoi (Absâî), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
28	24	6	1) The Martyrdom of 150 men and 24 women of Antinoë (Ansanâ).	ABCDFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Kîhak	*December*	*January*		
			2) The Glorious Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.	CDEFGHJ
29	25	7	1) The Feast of the Glorious Nativity.	ABCDEFGHJ
30	26	8	1) John (Yûannis), *Hegoumenos of Scetis.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) The Adoration of the Magi of the Saviour of the World.	B
			3) Arrival of Arianus the Governor in Akhmîm.	E
			4) David and James, *Bishops of Jerusalem.*	G
Tûbah				
1	27	9	1) Stephen (Istâfânûs), the chief of the deacons, *Mart.*	ABCDFJ
			2) Leontius (Lâûndîânûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Macarius (Maqârîûs), *59th Patr.*	D
			4) Dioscorus (Dîsqûrus) and Escupius (Saklâbîûs), *Mart.*	E
			5) Invention of the relics of St. Stephen.	EGHJ
			6) 8140 Martyrs of Akhmîm.	J
2	28	10	1) Theonas (Thâûnâûs), *16th Patr.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Callinicus (Ghallînîkûs), *Bishop of Aûsîm.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Yuna of Hermontis.	E
3	29	11	1) The Massacre of the Innocents.	ABCDEFGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Tûbah	*December*	*January*		
4	30	12	1) John (Yûhannâ) the Evangelist.	ABCDEFGHJ
5	31	13	1) Eugenius (Aûsâghanîûs) the soldier, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Bânikârûs, *Mart.*	E
	January			
6	1	14	1) The Circumcision of the Lord Christ.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) The Translation of Elias (Iîlîâ), *Prophet.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Marcianus (Marqîânûs), *8th Patr.*	ABCDFHJ
			4) Basil (Basîlîûs) the Great, *Bishop of Caesarea.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			5) Mark (Murqus), *73rd Patr.*	D
7	2	15	1) Silvester (Silbatrus), *Pope of Rome.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Victor (Buqtur).	E
8	3	16	1) Consecration of the Church of St. Macarius (Maqârîûs).	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Andronicus (Andarûnîqûs), *37th Patr.*	ABCDFHJ
			3) Benjamin (Banîâmîn), *38th Patr.*	ABCDFGHJ
			4) Zacharias (Zakhârîâs), *64th Patr.*	D
			5) Malachi (Malâkhî), *Prophet.*	D
9	4	17	1) Abraham (Abrâm), companion of Anbâ Gâûrahah (George).	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Anatolius (Anâtûlîûs), *Mart.*	E

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Tûbah	*January*	*January*		
10	5	18	1) The Vigil of the Feast of the Baptism of Christ.	ABDFGHJ
			2) Collection in Christian Churches to cover what had been taken from the holy fathers.	C
			3) Justus (Yustus), *disciple of St. Samuel.*	D
			4) Phocas (Fûqâs), *Mart.*	E
11	6	19	1) The Feast of the Manifestation of the Divinity, the Baptism.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) John (Yûânnis), *74th Patr.*	D
			3) Anatolius (Anâtûlîûs), *Mart.*	DFHJ
			4) Homily of the Holy Eucharist.	E
12	7	20	1) Monthly Commemoration of St. Michael the Archangel.	A
			2) Theodore (Tâûdûrus) the Eastern, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Anatolius (Anâtûlîûs), *Mart.*	AB
			4) Anonymous female saint.	E
13	8	21	1) The Miracle of the Marriage Feast at Cana of Galilee.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Theophilus (Thâûfîlûs), *Monk.*	AB
			3) Dimiana (Sitt Dimîânah), Mart.	A
			4) Archelides the Roman.	E
			5) Maximus (Maksîmûs), brother of Domitius.	D

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Tûbah	*January*	*January*		
14	9	22	1) Arselidus (Arshîlîdas) of Rome.	ABCFGJ
			2) Maximus (Maksîmûs), the brother of Domitius (Dûmâtîûs).	ABC
			3) Theophilus (Tâûfîlûs), *Monk.*	DF
			4) Mahârati.	E
15	10	23	1) Obadiah ('Ubîdiyâ), *Prophet.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Gregory (Ghrîgârîûs) of Nyssa.	BCDFGHJ
			3) Homily of one of the fathers.	E
16	11	24	1) Philotheus (Fîlûthâûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) John (Yûhannâ), *48th Patr.*	ABCDFJ
17	12	25	1) Maximus (Maksîmûs) and Domitius (Dûmâtîûs), *Ascetes.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Joseph (Yûsâb), *Bishop of Girga,* known as al-Abah.	A
			3) John (Yûhannâ) of the Golden Gospel.	E
18	13	26	1) James (Ya'qûb), *Bishop of Nisibis.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Mary and Martha.	G
19	14	27	1) Invention of the relics of SS. Apa Hor (Abâ Hûr), Pisoura (Bîsûrî), Shanûdah and Ambira (Ambîra) their mother.	ABCDEFHJ
20	15	28	1) Prochorus (Burûkhûrus) one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABCDEFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Tûbah	*January*	*January*		
			2) Consecration of the Church of St. John of the Golden Gospel (Yûhannâ), and the Translation of his relics to the Church.	ABDEFGHJ
			3) Bahnou (Bâhnû), *Mart.*, Kalug (Kalû), *Priest.*	ABDEFGHJ
			4) Bebnuva, *Mart.*	C
21	16	29	1) Falling asleep of Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Mother of God.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Hilaria (Iîlârîâ), daughter of the Emperor Zeno (Zînûn).	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Gregory (Ighrîghûrîûs), brother of St. Basil the Great (Basîlîûs).	ACDFHJ
			4) Sophia (Sufîah).	E
			5) Bartânûbâ.	E
22	17	30	1) Antony (Antûnîûs) the Great, *Ascete.*	ABCDEFGHJ
23	18	31	1) Timothy (Tîmûthâûs), *Apostle, Mart.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Cyril IV (Kîrillus), *110th Patr.*	A
			3) Badâsyûs of Fâû.	E
		February		
24	19	1	1) Mary (Marîam) the Alexandrian, *Ascete.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Pisadeh (Bisâdîh), *Priest.*	ABEFGHJ
			3) Ephraem (Afrâm) of Fargût.	E
25	20	2	1) Peter (Butrus) the Pious.	ABCDFHJ
			2) Askala (Askalâ) the Athlete of God, *Mart.*	ABDFHJ
			3) Abâdîûs, *Mart.*	E

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Tûbah	*January*	*February*		
26	21	3	1) Martyrdom of the 49 Martyrs of Scetis.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Anastasia (Anastâsîa).	ABCDFHJ
			3) Bagûsh, *Mart.*	E
27	22	4	1) Sarapion (Sarâbîûm), *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Suriel (Sûryâl), *Archangel.*	ABCDEJ
			3) Translation of the relics of St. Timothy (Timûthâûs) from Ephesus to Constantinople.	ABCDFGHJ
			4) Phoebammon (Abîfâm) the Soldier, *Mart.*	ABE
28	23	5	1) Clement (Aklîmanatus) of Rome, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Kaoun (Kâûû), *Mart.*	ABEF
			3) Elias (Hîlîâs) of al-Bahnasâ, *Mart.*	E
			4) Babylas (Fâfîlâs), *Mart.*	E
29	24	6	1) Xenia (Aksânî), *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Syriacus (Sirîâkûs), the Athlete of God.	ABDEFHJ
			3) Annunciation, Nativity and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.	F
30	25	7	1) Pistis, 'Faith' (Bîstis), Elpis, 'Hope' (Hilbûs), Agape, 'Charity' (Aghâbî) and their mother Sophia, 'Wisdom' (Sûfîah).	ABCDFHJ
			2) Palemon (Bâlâmûn), *Hermit.*	E
Amshîr				
1	26	8	1) The Second Oecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D.	ABCDFHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Amshîr	*January*	*February*		
			2) Consecration of the first Church built in the name of St. Peter (Butrus), the Crown of the Martyrs, *17th Patr.*	ABCDFHJ
			3) Abâdîûs (Abâdîûn), *Mart.*	E
2	27	9	1) Paul (Bûlâ), *the first Hermit.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Longinus (Langînûs), Hegoumenos of the Ennaton al-Zugâg.	ABCDEFHJ
3	28	10	1) James (Ya'qûb), *Monk.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Ephraem (Afrâm) the Syrian.	B
			3) Hadra of Benhadab, *Monk.*	E
4	29	11	1) Agapus (Aghâbûs) one of the Seventy Disciples, *Mart.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Eucharistus (Aûkharîstûs).	E
5	30	12	1) Agrippinus (Aghrîbînûs), *10th Patr.*	ABCDFGHJ
			2) Bishoi (Bishoî), Master of the Monastery of Akhmîm and Apa Nub (Abâ Nûb).	ABCDEFGHJ
			3) Apollo (Abûllûs), friend of Apip (Abîb).	ABCDFHJ
			4) Translation of the relics of the 49 Martyrs of Scetis to the Church of the Dair Abû Maqâr.	ABDFHJ
			5) Hippolytus of Rome (Abûlîdus).	BCD
6	31	13	1) The invention of the relics of St. Hippolytus (Abûlîdus) of Rome.	ABC

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Amshîr	*January*	*February*		
			2) Cyrus (Kîr) and John (Yûhannâ) and three virgins and their mother, *Mart.*	ABC
			3) Hippolytus (Abûlîdus) of Rome.	DFGHJ
			4) Zânufiûs.	E
	February			
7	1	14	1) Alexander (Alâksandarûs), *43rd Patr.*	ABCDFHJ
			2) Theodore (Tâûdûrûsc) *45th Patr.*	ABCDFHJ
			3) Abû Qîr (Abûqîr) and John (Yûhannâ), *Mart.*	DFGHJ
			4) Alexandra (al-Iskandarah).	E
8	2	15	1) Presentation of Christ in the Temple.	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Falling asleep of St. Simeon (Sam'ân).	B
9	3	16	1) Parsuma (Barsûmâ), the father of the Syrian monks.	ABDEFGHJ
			2) Paul (Bûlus) the Syrian, *Mart.*	ABCEFHJ
10	4	17	1) James (Ya'qûb) the Apostle and son of Alphaeus (Halfâ).	ABDEFHJ
			2) Justus (Yustus), son of King Nûmârîûs, *Mart.*	ABDEFGHJ
			3) Isidore (Isîdhûrus) of Pelusium.	ABCDEFHJ
			4) Philo (Fîlâ), Bishop of the Persians, *Mart.*	ABDEF
11	5	18	1) Fabianus (Fâbîânus), *Bishop of Rome, Mart.*	ABDEFHJ
			2) Valentianus, *Bishop of Rome.*	C

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Amshîr	*February*	*February*		
12	6	19	1) Monthly Commemoration of St. Michael, *Archangel.*	AF
			2) Gelasius (Galâsîûs), *Monk.*	ABCDEFHJ
13	7	20	1) Sergius (Sargîûs) of Atripe with his father, mother, sister and many others, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Timothy (Tîmûthâûs), *32nd Patr.*	ABCDEFGHJ
14	8	21	1) Severus (Sâwîrus), *Patr. of Antioch.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) James (Ya'qûb), *50th Patr.*	ABCDEFHJ
15	9	22	1) Zachariah (Zakarîâ), *Prophet.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Consecration of the first Church of the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste by St. Basil the Great.	ABCDEFHJ
			3) Paphnutius (Bafanûtîûs), *Ascete.*	ABCDEFGHJ
16	10	23	1) Elizabeth (Alîsâbât), Mother of St. John the Baptist.	ABCDEFHJ
17	11	24	1) Menas (Mînâ), the Monk of Akhmîm, *Mart.*	ABCD
			2) Abraham al-Qadîs.	G
18	12	25	1) Melatius (Malâtîûs), *Patr. of Antioch.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) James, *Apostle.*	CG
19	13	26	1) Translation of the relics of St. Martin (Martîânûs) the Monk from Athens to Antioch.	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Peter (Butrus), *21st Patr.*	G

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Amshîr	*February*	*February*		
20	14	27	1) Peter (Butrus), *21st Patr.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Basil (Basîlîûs), Theodore (Tâûdûrus) and Timothy (Tîmûthâûs), *Mart.*	ABDEFHJ
21	15	28	1) Monthly Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	AF
			2) Onesimus (Anîsîmûs), disciple of St. Paul, *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
			3) Gabriel (Ghabrîâl), *57th Patr.*	ABDEFHJ
			4) Zacharias (Zachârîâs), *Bishop of Sakhâ.*	ABCDEFHJ
			5) Batros, *Metropolitan of Damascus.*	G
			6) Peter (Butrus), *21st Patr.*	F
		March		
22	16	1	1) Marutha (Mârûtâ), *Bishop of Mîâfaraqin, Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
23	17	2	1) Eusebius (Aûsâbîus), son of Basilides (Bâsîlîdus), *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
24	18	3	1) Agapetus (Aghâbîtûs), *Bishop.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Timothy (Tîmûthâûs) of Gaza.	ABDFHJ
			3) Matthias (Matîâs) of Qûs, *Mart.*	ABDEFHJ
25	19	4	1) Archippus (Arkhabbus), Philemon (Filîmûn) and Abfîah the Virgin, *Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Qouna (Kûnâ) and Menas (Mînâ), *Mart.*	AD
			3) Cosmas (Qusmâs), *Mart.*	B

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Amshîr	*February*	*March*		
26	20	5	1) Hosea (Husha'), *Prophet.*	ABCDEFHJ
			2) Zadok (Sâdûq) and the 128 Martyrs, *Mart.*	ABCDEFHJ
27	21	6	1) Eustathius (Aûstâthîûs), *Patr. of Antioch.*	ABCDEFHJ
28	22	7	1) Theodore the Greek (Thâûdhûrus), *Mart.*	ACDEFGHJ
			2) Translation of the relics of St. Theodore the General from Emesa (Amasîâ) to Nyssa.	B
29	23	8	1) Polycarp (Bûlîkârbûs), *Bishop of Smyrna, Mart.*	ABCDEFGHJ
			2) Annunciation, Nativity and Resurrection of Christ.	F
30	24	9	1) Invention of the Head of St. John the Baptist.	ABCDEFGHJ
Barmahât				
1	25	10	1) Narcissus (Narkîsûs), *Bishop of Jerusalem.*	ADEHJ
			2) Alexander (Alaksandarûs), the soldier of Rome, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			3) Mercurius (Markûrah), *Bishop.*	ABCDEGHJ
			4) Barcasius, *Bishop of Jerusalem.*	BC
2	26	11	1) Macrobius (Makarâûî), *Bishop of Nikiu.*	ABCDGHJ
3	27	12	1) Cosmas (Qusmâ), *58th Patr.*	ABCDHJ
			2) Porphyrius (Barfûrîûs), *Mart.*	ABD
			3) Hadîd, *Priest.*	BCH
			4) Barqonias.	C
			5) Macrobius.	E

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Barmahât	*February*	*March*		
4	28	13	1) Council on the Island of Banî 'Amra.	ABCDHJ
			2) Habulyus (Hânûlîûs) of Perga, *Mart.*	ABCDHJ
			3) Porphyrius, *Mart.*	E
	March			
5	1	14	1) Sarapamon (Sarâbâmûn), Hegoumenus of Dair Abû Yûhannis.	ABCDHJ
			2) Eudoxia (Aûdhûksîah), *Mart.*	ABCDHJ
			3) Peter (Butrus).	E
6	2	15	1) Dioscorus (Dîsqûrus), *New Mart.*	ABCDHJ
			2) Theodotus (Thâûdûtus), *Bishop of Kyrenia, Cyprus.*	ABCDEHJ
			3) Occupation of the western part of Egypt by the Ethiopians.	E
			4) Theodosius, Emperor.	G
7	3	16	1) Philemon (Fîlîmûn) and Apollonius (Ablânîus), *Mart.*	ABCD
			2) Mary (Marîâm), *Mart.*	E
8	4	17	1) Matthias (Mattîâs), the Apostle, *Mart.*	ABCDHJ
			2) Julian (Yûlîânûs), *11th Patr.*	ABCDHJ
			3) Arianus (Arîânûs), *Governor of Antinoë, Mart.*	ABCDHJ
			Dioscorus, *New Mart.*	E
9 (1)	5	18	1) Cocon (Qûnn), *Syrian hermit.*	AB

(1) The 9th of Barmahât is missing from D and E.

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Barmahât	*March*	*March*		
			2) Arandarianus (Arandarîânûs) and Martha (Martâ) his wife, and Eusebius (Aûsâbius) and Armâ and 40 martyrs, *Mart.*	A
			Andarîânûs.	B
			Abrianus.	C
			3) Philemon (Fîlîmûn) and Apollonius (Ablânîus) *Mart.*	E
10	6	19	1) Invention of the Holy Cross by St. Helena and its recovery from the Persians by the Roman Emperor Heraclius.	ABCDEGHJ
11	7	20	1) Basil (Bâsîlîûs), *Bishop of Jerusalem.*	ABCDEHJ
12	8	21	1) Monthly commemoration of St. Michael, *Archangel.*	A
			2) Manifestation of the Virginity of Demetrius (Dîmitrîûs), *12th Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
			3) Malachias (Malâkhî), *Mart.*	ABCD
13 (2)	9	22	1) Dionysius (Dîûnîsîûs), *14th Patr.*	ACDEHJ
			2) Macarius (Maqârîûs) the Great and Macarius of Alexandria returned from exile.	AD
			3) The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.	ACDEGHJ
14	10	23	1) Cyril III, (Kîrillus), *75th Patr.*	A

(2) The 13th, 14th, and 15th of Barmahât are missing from B.

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Barmahât	*March*	*March*		
14	10	23	2) Shenute (Shanûdah) of Bahnasa, *Mart.*	ACDEHJ
			3) Eugenius (Aûghânîûs), Aghapodirus (Aghâbûdirus), Valentinus (Walandîûs), *Mart.*	ADEJ
			4) Euchanus, Galidrus, Alibdus, *Mart.*	C
15	11	24	1) Sarah (Sârah), *Nun of Upper Egypt.*	ACDEHJ
			2) Helius (Iîlîâs) of Ahnâs, *Mart.*	ADEGJ
16	12	25	1) Khail (Michael) (Khâîîl), *46th Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
17	13	26	1) Lazarus (La'âzar), the beloved of the Lord.	ABCDEHJ
			2) George (Girgis) the Pious, *Ascete,* Balasius (Balâsiûs), *Mart.*, Joseph (Yûsuf), *Bishop.*	ABCE
			3) Basilius (Bâsîlîûs), *Metropolitan of Jerusalem.*	A
18	14	27	1) Isidorus (Isîdhûrus), companion of Sana the soldier.	ABCDEGHJ
19	15	28	1) Aristobulus (Aristûbûlus), one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Seven Saints of Alexandria and Agapius (Aghâbius) and their companion, *Mart.*	ABCDEJ
20	16	29	1) Khail (Michael) (Khâîîl), *56th Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Raising of Lazarus (La'âzar) from the tomb.	BCDGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Barmahât	*March*	*March*		
			3) Consecration of the Church of St. Iskhiron.	BCDHJ
21	17	30	1) Monthly commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	A
			2) Presence of Our Lord in Bethany.	ABCDEHJ
			3) The Order of the High priest to kill Lazarus.	BDE
			4) Theodore (Tâûdûrûs), Timothy (Tîmûthâûs), *Mart.*	BCEHJ
			5) Thausta. *Mart.*	C
22	18	31	1) Cyril (Kîrillus), *Bishop of Jerusalem.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Michael (Mikhâîl), *Bishop of Naqâdah.*	E
		April		
23	19	1	1) Daniel (Dâniâl), *Prophet.*	ABCDEHJ
24	20	2	1) Macarius (Maqârîûs), *59th Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
25	21	3	1) Onesiphorus (Fâriskâ), one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABCDEHJ
26	22	4	1) Eupraxia (Brâksîâ), *Virgin.*	ABCDEHJ
27	23	5	1) The Crucifixion of Our Lord.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Macarius (Maqârîûs) the Great.	ABCDEGHJ
28	24	6	1) Constantine (Kustantin) the Great, *Emperor.*	ABCDEHJ
29	25	7	1) Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary.	ABDEGHJ
			2) Resurrection of Christ from the Dead.	CDEGJ
			3) Eutychia (Aûtûkîâ).	D

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Barmahât	*March*	*April*		
30	26	8	1) Gabriel (Ghabrîâl), *Archangel.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Translation of the relics of James (Ya'qûb) the Sawn-asunder.	ABC
			3) Samson, *Judge.*	CDEJ
Barmûdah				
1	27	9	1) Silvanus (Silûânus), *Ascete of Scetis.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Attack of the Berbers on Dair Abû Maqâr.	ABDEHJ
			3) Aaron (Hârûn), *Priest.*	BD
			4) Passage of Pilgrims from the Sahid.	C
			5) Discussion regarding the feast of Haron.	C
2	28	10	1) Christophorus (Akhristûfûrus) *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Halem the Egyptian.	H
3	29	11	1) John (Yûhannâ), *Bishop of Jerusalem* under the Emperor Hadrian.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Michael (Mikhâîl), *71st Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
			3) Theodorus, *Mart.*	H
4	30	12	1) Victor (Buqtur), Decius (Dâkîûs), Eirene (Iîrînî) the Virgin and those with them, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
5	31	13	1) Ezekiel (Haziqyâl), the son of Boas (Bûzâ), *Proph.*	ABCDEGHJ
	April			
6	1	14	1) Appearance of Our Lord to Thomas (Tûmâ).	ABDEHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Barmûdah	*April*	*April*		
6	1	14	2) Mary the Egyptian (Marîam al-Misrîah).	ABCDEHJ
7	2	15	1) Joachim (Yûâqîm) the maternal grand-father of Christ.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Macrobius (Maqurûfiûs) *Ascete.*	ACDHJ
			3) Agapius (Aghâbîû), Theodore (Tâûdhûrah), *Mart.*	BCDEHJ
8	3	16	1) Agape, (Aghâbî), Eirene (Iîrînî), Shyunah (Sîûnîah) *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) 150 Persian Martyrs.	ABCEHJ
9	4	17	1) Zosimus (Zûsîmâ), *Hermit in Palestine.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Miracle which was performed by St. Shenuute (Sânûtîûs), *55th Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
10	5	18	1) Isaac (Ishaq), disciple of Apollo (Abulîûs).	ABCDEHJ
			2) Gabriel ibn Turaik (Ghubrîâl), *70th Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
11	6	19	1) Theodora (Thâûdhûrâ) of Alexandria.	ABCDEHJ
			2) John (Yûhannâ), *Bishop of Gaza.*	BDGHJ
12	7	20	1) Alexander (Alîksandrûs), *Bishop of Jerusalem.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Antony (Antûnîûs), *Bishop of Tammûah.*	ABDEGHJ
			3) Michael, *Archangel.*	J
13	8	21	1) Jesus (Yashû) and Joseph (Yûsuf), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Denisa (Dîwânîsah) the deaconess.	ABEJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Barmûdah	*April*	*April*		
			3) Midius (Mîdîûs), *Mart.*	ABDE
14	9	22	1) Maximus (Maksîmûs), *15th Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
15	10	23	1) Consecration of the first Jacobite Christian Sanctuary.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Agapius (Aghâbîûs), one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABCEHJ
			3) Alexandra (Alîksandra), wife of Diocletian (Dîqalâdîanûs).	ABCDEHJ
16	11	24	1) Antipas (Antîbâ), Bishop of Pergamos, disciple of St. John the Evangelist, *Mart.*	ABDEHJ
			2) Antius.	C
17	12	25	1) James (Ya'qûb), the Apostle, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
18	13	26	1) Arsenius (Arsânîûs), slave of St. Sousnyous (Sûsnîûs) *Mart.*	ABDEHJ
			2) Eustathius.	C
19	14	27	1) Simeon (Sima'ân) the Armenian, Bishop of Persia and 150 with him, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) David, *Monk, New Mart.*	H
20	15	28	1) Paphnute (Bînûdah) of Denderah), Mart.	ABCDEHJ
21	16	29	1) Monthly Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	AJ
			2) Hierotheus (Barûthâûs), Philosopher of Athens and convert of St. Paul.	ABCDEGHJ
22	17	30	1) Isaac (Ishaq) of Hourin.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Alexander (Alîksandarûs), *19th Patr.*	ABCEHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Barmûdah	*April*	*April*		
			3) Mark (Murqus), 49th Patr.	ABCEGHJ
			4) Khael (Khâîîl), *53rd Patr.*	ABCDEJ
		May		
23	18	1	1) George (Gâûrgius) of Lydda, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Kom.	G
24	19	2	1) Shenute (Sânûtîûs), *55th Patr.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Sina (Sanâ).	ABCDEHJ
25	20	3	1) Sarah (Sârah of Antioch and her two sons, *Mart.*	ABDEHJ
			2) The wife of Sacratus.	C
			3) Paphnutius (Babnûdah) and Theodorus and 100 Martyrs.	CEHJ
			4) Young men of Ephesus.	G
26	21	4	1) Sousnyous (Sûsnîûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
27	22	5	1) Victor (Buqtur), *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
28	23	6	1) Milius (Mîlîûs), the Ascete, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
29	24	7	1) Eurastus (Arsatûs), one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Decius (Dâkius), or Acacuis (Akâkîûs), *Bishop of Jerusalem.*	5 BCEHJ
30	25	8	1) Mark (Murqus), the Evangelist, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
Bashons				
1	26	9	1) The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Job (Ayûb) the Righteous.	A
2	27	10	1) Theodore (Tâdrus), disciple of St. Pachomius (Bâkhûmîûs)	ABCEGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Bashons	*April*	*May*		
			2) Job (Ayûb) the Righteous.	BCDEGHJ
			3) Simeon (Sama'ân), *Apostle.*	B
			4) Philotheus.	H
3	28	11	1) Jason (Yâsûn), one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Euthymius (Aûtîmus) of Fûah, *Mart.*	ABC
4	29	12	1) John (Yûhannâ), *29th Patr.*	ABCDEGHJ
5	30	13	1) Jeremiah (Irmyâ) the Prophet, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
	May			
6	1	14	1) Isaac (Ishaq) of Tiphre.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Macarius (Maqârîûs) of Alexandria.	ABCDEGHJ
			3) Paphnute of al-Denderah.	EHJ
7	2	15	1) Athanasius (Athanâsîûs), *20th Patr.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Nativity of St. Shenoute Shanûdah).	B
8	3	16	1) John (Yuhinnis) of Sanhût.	ABEGHJ
			2) Daniel (Dânîâl), *Hegoumenos of Scetis.*	ABCEHJ
			3) Ascension of Our Lord into Heaven.	BCDEGHJ
			4) Bakhbas of Senhum, son of Macarba.	C
9	4	17	1) Helena (Hîlânah), *Queen.*	ABCDEHJ
10	5	18	1) The Three Children in the Furnace, Ananias (Hannyâ), Azarias ('Azârya), Misael (Mîsaîîl).	ABCDEGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Bashons	*May*	*May*		
11	6	19	1) Theoclia (Thâûklyâ), wife of St. Justus (Yustus), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Paphnute (Bafnûtîûs), *Bishop.*	ABCDEJ
			3) Nichomius.	H
12	7	20	1) Consecration of the Church of Sitt Dimîâna.	AJ
			2) Translation of the relics of St. John Chrysostomus from Kuma to Constantinople.	ABCDEGHJ
			3) Appearance of a Cross of Fire over Golgotha in 351 A.D.	ABDEHJ
			4) Michael, *Archangel.*	J
13	8	21	1) Arsenius (Arsânîûs), tutor of Arcadius and Honorius, the sons of Theodosius the Great.	ABCDEGHJ
14	9	22	1) Pachomius, (Bakhûmîûs), father of Eastern Monasticism.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Epimachus (Abîmâkhus) of Pelusium (Pharan).	ABCDEHJ
15	10	23	1) Simon (Sama'ân) the Zealot.	ABCDEHJ
			2) 400 Martyrs of Denderah.	ABCEHJ
			3) Menas (Mînâ), *Deacon.*	ABCEHJ
			4) Sidrach.	J
16	11	24	1) John (Yûhannâ), *Evangelist.*	ABCDEGHJ
17	12	25	1) Epiphanius (Abîfânîûs), *Bishop of Cyprus.*	ABCDEGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Bashons	*May*	*May*		
18	13	26	1) George (Gâûrgi), friend of Abraham (Abrâm) of Scetis.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of St. Paul at Alexandria.	C
			3) Descent of the Holy Spirit	D
			4) Shenute (Shanûdah).	G
19	14	27	1) Isaac (Ishaq) of al-Qulâlî.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Isidorus (Isîdhûrus) of Antioch, *Mart.*	ABCDHJ
20	15	28	1) Amonius (Amûnîûs), *Hermit.*	ABCDEGHJ
21	16	29	1) Monthly Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	AGJ
			2) Martian (Martînîânûs) of Caesarea.	ABCDEHJ
22	17	30	1) Andronicus (Andrûnîkûs), one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABCDEHJ
23	18	31	1) Junius (Yûnîâs), one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABDEHJ
			2) Julianus (Yûlîânûs) and his mother.	ABCDEHJ
		June		
24	19	1	1) The Coming of our Lord Christ into Egypt.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Habbakuk (Habqûq), *Prophet,* and consecration of a church in his name.	B
25	20	2	1) Colluthus (Kûlûtus) of Arsinoë, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Hirutas, (Hîrûtâs), *Mart.*	B

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Baṣhons	*May*	*June*		
26	21	3	1) Thomas (Tûmâ) the Apostle, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
27	22	4	1) John (Yûânnis), *30th Patr.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Lazarus (La'âzar), the friend of Christ.	ABCEGHJ
28	23	5	1) Translation of the relics of St. Epiphanius to Cyprus.	ABCDEHJ
29	24	6	1) Simon (Sama'ân) *Stylite.*	ABCDEGHJ
30	25	7	1) Michael (Mîkhâîl), *68th Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Phoras, one of the Seventy Disciples.	CDEHJ
			3) Demadius and Simon the Little.	G
Baûnah				
1	26	8	1) Consecration of the Church of St. Leontius (Lâûndîûs) the Syrian.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Cosmas (Quzmân) of Taha and his companions, *Mart.*	ABDEHJ
			3) Abifam (Abû Fâm), *Soldier, Mart.*	ABEGHJ
			4) Zikâm, *Mart.*	D
2	27	9	1) Invention of the relics of St. John the Baptist and Elisha (Ilîsha') the Prophet at Alexandria.	ABCDEGHJ
3	28	10	1) Building of the first Church of St. George (Girgis) at Rome.	A
			2) Martha (Martâ) of Egypt.	ABCDEGHJ
			3) Alladius (Allâdîûs), *Bishop, Mart.*	ABCDEHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Baûnah	*May*	*June*		
4	29	11	1) Synusius (Sînîsîûs) of Balkim, *Mart.*	ABCDEH
			2) Amon (Amûn) and Sophia (Sûfîah), *Mart.*	ABCDEGJ
			3) John (Yûhannâ) of Heraclia, *Mart.*	ABJ
			4) Apa Hor (Abû Hûr).	AB
5	30	12	1) James (Ya'qûb) the Oriental.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Bishoi (Bishaî) and Peter (Butrus), *Mart.*	AB
			3) Consecration of the Church of St. Victor (Buqtur) at Shû.	AB
			4) Macarius of Menuf.	C
			5) Macarius, *Mart.*	DEGHJ
6	31	13	1) Theodore (Thâûdhurûs), the monk of Alexandria, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
	June			
7	1	14	1) Iskhiron (Abaskîrûn) of Killin, *Mart.*	ABDEGHJ
			2) Sanhirun, Mart.	C
8	2	15	1) Consecration of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of al-Mahanmah.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Amâdah and her sons, Armânîûs and Amah.	BCDEGHJ
9	3	16	1) Samuel (Samwîl), *Prophet.*	ABCDEGJ
			2) Lucilianus (Lûkîlîânûs) and four others, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			3) Translation of the relics of St. Mercurius to Cairo.	ABJ
10	4	17	1) Eudaemon (Dâbâmûn) Epistemon (Bastâmûn), Sophia (Sûfîa), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Baûnah	*June*	*June*		
10	4	17	2) Commemoration of the closing of the temples and the opening of the churches by St. Constantine.	ABCDEHJ
			3) John (Yûânnis), *103rdPatr.*	AB
			4) Enthronement of Anbâ Dîmitrîûs II, *111th Patr.*	AB
			5) Ourshanoufah.	DEHJ
11	5	18	1) Claudius (Aqalûdîûs) brother of the king Numarianus, *Mart.*	ABCDEGH
			2) Consecration of Church of the Forty Martyrs.	CDEH
12	6	19	1) Justus (Yustus), *6th Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Cyril (Kîrillus), *67th Patr.*	AB
			3) Euphemia (Aûfîmîah).	ABCDEHJ
			4) Michael (Mikhâîl), *Archangel.*	BDEGHJ
13	7	20	1) John II (Yûhannâ), *Bishop of Jerusalem.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Gabriel (Gabrâîl), *Archangel.* (The Turûhât of the Saints has Michael).	ABCDEHJ
14	8	21	1) Cyrus (Kîr) and John (Yûhannâ), Ptolemaeus (Abtalamâûs) and Philip (Fîlîbûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
15	9	22	1) Consecration of the Church of St. Menas (Mâr Mînâ) at Maryût.	ABCDEGHJ
16	10	23	1) Onuphrius (Aba Nufr), *Hermit.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Latsun of al-Bahnasâ.	DGH
			3) Palemon (Balâmûn).	DEGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Baûnah	*June*	*June*		
17	11	24	1) Latsun (Lâtsûn).	ABCEJ
			2) Damianus (Dâmîânûs), *35th Patr.*	DH
18 (1)	12	25	1) Damianus (Dâmîânûs), *35th Patr.*	ABCEJ
19	13	26	1) George (Girgis), *Mart.* 959 A.D	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Bishoi Anoub (Bishaî Anûb), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			3) Archilaeus (Arshilâûs), *18th Patr.*	BJ
20	14	27	1) Elisha (Ilîsha'), *Proph.*	ABCDEGHJ
21	15	28	1) Commemoration of the building of the first Church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary at Philippi.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Timotheus (Tîmûthâûs) the Egyptian *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			3) Cerdon (Kadûnûs), *4th Patr.*	ABDEHJ
22	16	29	1) Consecration of the Church of SS. Cosmas and Damian and their brothers and their mother.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Codius (Cerdon), *4th Patr.*	C
23	17	30	1) Apa Nub (Abâ Nûb), *Hermit.*	ABCDEGHJ
		July		
24	18	1	1) Moses the Black (Mûsâ) of Scetis, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
25	19	2	1) Jude (Yuhûdhâ), one of the Seventy Disciples, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Peter (Butrus), *34th Patr.*	ABDEGHJ

(1) The 18th of Baûnah is missing from D and E.

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Baûnah	*June*	*June*		
26	20	3	1) Joshua (Yushûa'), *Prophet.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of St. Gabriel.	DEJ
27	21	4	1) Ananias (Hanânîâ), one of the Seventy Disciples, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Thomas (Tûmâ) of Shandalât, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
28	22	5	1) Theodosius (Thâûdhûsîûs), *33rd Patr.*	ABCDEGHJ
29	23	6	1) The Seven Hermits of Mt. Tûnah, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Hor (Abâ Hûr), Bishoi (Bishaî) Diadura (Dîwadûra) and their mother, *Mart.*	ABDEHJ
			3) Consecration of the Church of St. Suriel the Angel.	C
30	24	7	1) Nativity of St. John the Baptist.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Cosmas (Quzmâ), *Patr.*	B
			3) Martha and Mary.	G
Abîb				
1	25	8	1) Febronia (Afrûnîâ), *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Biukha (Bîukhâ), Banain (Banâîn), *Mart.*	ABDEHJ
2	26	9	1) Thaddaeus (Tadâûs), *Apostle.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Benufa and Benaben, *Mart.*	C
3	27	10	1) Cyril (Kîrillus), *24th Patr.*	ABDEGHJ
			2) Celestinus (Kalastinus), *Pope of Rome.*	BCDEHJ
4	28	11	1) Translation of the relics of SS. Cyrus and John to the Church of St. Mark the Evangelist, Alexandria.	ABCDEGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Abîb	*June*	*July*		
5	29	12	1) Peter (Butrus) and Paul (Bûlus), Apostles, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
6	30	13	1) Aulibas (Aûlibâs), one of the Seventy Disciples, *Mart.*	ABCDEH
			2) Theodosia (Tâûdhûsîah) and those with her, *Mart.*	ABDEHJ
			3) Bartholomew of Rashîd.	G
	July			
7	1	14	1) Shenute (Shanûdah), *Head of the Solitaires.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Ignatius (Aghanâtîûs), *Bishop of Antioch, Mart.*	ABDEHJ
8	2	15	1) Bishoi (Bishûî).	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Piroun (Abîrûh) and Atom (Atûm), *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			3) Balanah (Bilânâ) the Priest *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			4) Poemen (Bîmânun), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			5) Carus (Kâras), or Cyrus brother of the Emperor Theodosius the Great.	ABCDEHJ
			6) Marcus of Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs.	C
9	3	16	1) Simeon (Sama'ân)) the Apostle, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Celadion (Kâlâûdîânûs), *9th Patr.*	ABCEH
			3) Aaron, *Mart.*	G
10	4	17	1) Theodorus (Thâûdhûrus), *Bishop of the Pentapolis, Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Theodorus (Thâûdhûrus), *Bishop of Corinth,* and those with him, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Abîb	*July*	*July*		
			3) Gabriel (Ghabrîâl), *95th Patr.*	AB
11	5	18	1) John (Yûhannâ) and Simon (Sama'ân), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Isaiah (Isha'yâ), *Hermit.*	ABCDEHJ
12	6	19	1) Monthly Commemoration of St. Michael.	ABDEHJ
			2) Apa Hor (Abâ Hûr) of Syracuse, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
13	7	20	1) Pisentius (Bîsantâûs), *Bishop of Qift.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Apa Hor (Abâ Hûr) of Tûkh, *Mart.*	A
			3) Shenute (Shanûdah), *New Mart.*	ABE
			4) Amon (Amûn) of Tûkh, *Mart.*	BCDEGHJ
14	8	21	1) Proconius (Barûkûnîûs), *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
15	9	22	1) Ephraem (Afrâm), the Syrian.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Cyriacus (Qirîâqûs) and Julietta (Yûlîtah his mother, *Mart.*	ABCDEJ
			3) Horasius (Hûrasîûs), *Mart.*	BDEGHJ
16	10	23	1) John (Yûhannâ) the Possessor of the Golden Gospel.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Translation of the relics of St. George to the church in Old Cairo.	AB
			3) Consecration of the Church of St. Philotheus.	B
			4) Isidore of Heliopolis.	G

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Abîb	*July*	*July*		
17	11	24	1) Euphemia (Aûfîmîah), *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
18	12	25	1) James (Ya'qûb) the Apostle, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Athanasius of Clysma.	G
19	13	26	1) Panteleemon (Batlûn at-Tabîb), *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Bebdhaba, *Bishop, Mart.*	C
			3) Antony, *Bishop.*	G
20	14	27	1) Theodorus (Thâûdhûrus) of Shutab, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
21	15	28	1) Susnyus (Sûsnîûs), *Eunuch.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Blessed Virgin Mary.	EGHJ
			3) Simode.	CGHJ
22	16	29	1) Macarius (Maqârîûs), son of Basilides (Wasîlâdîûs).	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Leontius (Lâûndîûs) of Tripoli.	ABCDEJ
23	17	30	1) Longinus (Langînûs) the Centurion, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Mârinâ, *Mart.*	EHJ
24	18	31	1) Apa Nub (Abâ Nûb), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Simon (Sîmâûn), *42nd Patr.*	ABCDEGHJ
			3) Ascension of Enoch.	G
		August		
25	19	1	1) Thecla (Taklah).	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Isaac (Abâ Ishaq) of Shama, *Mart.*	ABCDE
			3) Hilaria (Lîârîah), *Mart.*	ABCDE
			4) Thecla (Taklah) and Muhapi (Mûhabî), *Mart.*	ABCDEJ
			5) Antony (Antûnîûs) of Bana, *Mart.*	ABDEJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Abîb	*July*	*August*		
			6) Apa Karagun (Abâ Karâgûn), *Mart.*	ABCDEJ
			7) Dometius (Dumâdius) the Syrian, *Mart.*	AB
			8) Consecration of the Church of Abû Saifain.	ABCDEGJ
26	20	2	1) Joseph (Yûsîf), the Just, the Carpenter, the father to Christ.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Timothy (Tîmûthâûs), *22nd Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
27	21	3	1) Amon (Abâmûn), *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of St. Abifam the Soldier.	BCDEJ
			3) Vision of Ezekiel.	G
28	22	4	1) Mary Magdalene (Mariam al-Magdaliah).	ABCDEGHJ
29	23	5	1) Translation of the relics of St. Andrew (Andarâûs) the Apostle from Syria to Constantinople.	AB
			2) Urshenufa (Warashanûfius), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			3) Translation of the relics of St. Thaddaeus.	CDEGJ
			4) Commemoration of the Holy Gospel, the Nativity and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.	E
30	24	6	1) Mercurius (Maqûrîûs) and Ephraem (Afrâm), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Translation of the relics of St. Timothy, *Patr.*	G

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Masrî	*July*	*August*		
1	25	7	1) Apoli (Abâlî), *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Cyril V (Kîrillus), 112th *Patr.*	A
2	26	8	1) Paesa (Abâsiah).	ABCDEHJ
			2) Menas, *Mart.*	G
3	27	9	1) Simon (Sama'ân), *Stylite.*	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Isidorus.	C
4	28	10	1) Hezekiah (Hazaqiah), King.	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Consecration of the Church of St. Antony of the Monastery of St. Antony.	BCD
			3) David (Dâûd) and his brothers of Sindjâr, *Mart.*	DEG
5	29	11	1) John (Yûhannâ) the Soldier, *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
6	30	12	1) Julietta (Yulitah), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Besa, disciple of Shenute.	G
7	31	13	1) Annunciation to Joachim (Yûâqîm) of the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Timothy (Tîmûthâûs), *26th Patr.*	ABDEGHJ
			3) Confession of St. Peter at Caesarea Philippi.	BDEHJ
			4) Isidorus, *Mart.*	C
	August			
8	1	14	1) Eleazar (Ilîa'azar) and his wife Salome (Sâlûmî) and their children, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
9	2	15	1) Auri (Aûrî) of Shatânû, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
10	3	16	1) Matra (Matrâ), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Masrî	*August*	*August*		
10	3	16	2) Pihebs (Bîkhîbus) of Ashmûn Tanâh, *Mart.*	ABG
			3) Yûhannîs, *Mart.*	CDEGHJ
11	4	17	1) Moses (Mûîsîs), *Bishop of Ausîm.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Ptolemaeus.	G
12	5	18	1) Commemoration of the Archangel Michael (Mikhâîl).	AGJ
			2) Enthronement of St. Constantine (Qustantîn).	ABCDEHJ
13	6	19	1) Transfiguration of Christ.	ABCDEGHJ
14	7	20	1) Commemoration of the Great Miracle performed by God at the time of Theophilus (Tâûfîlus), *23rd Patr.*	ABCDEHJ
15	8	21	1) Marina (Mârînâ).	ABCDEHJ
16	9	22	1) Bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	ABCDEGHJ
17	10	23	1) James (Ya'qûb) the Soldier, *Mart.*	ABCDEGHJ
18	11	24	1) Alexander (Alîksandarûs), *Patriarch of Constantinople.*	ABDEHJ
			2) Alexander, *Patr.*	C
			3) Eudemon (Aûdamûn) of Armant, *Mart.*	E
19	12	25	1) Return of the relics of St. Macarius (Maqârîûs) to his monastery in Scetis.	ABCDEGHJ
20	13	26	1) The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.	ABCDEGHJ
21	14	27	1) Monthly Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.	AJ
			2) Eirene (Irînî).	ABCDEGHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Masrî	*August*	*August*		
22	15	28	1) Micah (Mînhâ), *Prophet.*	ABCDEGHJ
23	16	29	1) The Thirty Thousand Martyrs of Alexandria.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Damianus (Damîânûs) of Antioch, *Mart.*	BCDEHJ
24	17	30	1) Takla Haymanot (Taklâ Haîmânût).	AB
			2) Thomas (Tûmâ), *Bishop of Mur'ash.*	BCDEHJ
25	18	31	1) Besarion (Bîsârîûn), disciple of St. Antony.	ABCDEHJ
		September		
26	19	1	1) Moses (Mûîsis) and Sarah (Sârah) his sister.	ABCDEHJ
			2) Agapius (Aghâbîûs) the Soldier and Thacla (Taklâ) his sister, *Mart.*	ABCJ
27	20	2	1) Benjamin (Banîâmîn) and Eudoxia (Aûduksîah), *Mart.*	ABC
			2) Mary (Marîam) the Armenian, *New Mart.*	D
28	21	3	1) Abraham (Ibrâhîm), Isaac (Ishaq), Jacob (Ya'qûb).	ABCDEGHJ
			2) Assumption of Isaac, son of Abraham.	CDEGHJ
			3) Assumption of Jacob.	CDEGHJ
			4) Benjamin and Eudoxia, *Mart.*	CDEHJ
29	22	4	1) Athanasius (Athanâsîûs) the Bishop and Gerasimus (Jarâsîmûs) and Theodotus (Thâûtîtus), *Mart.*	ABCDEHJ

Copt.	Jul.	Greg.	Commemorations	Sources
Masrî	*August*	*September*		
			2) The arrival of the relics of St. John the Short (Yuhinnis Qasîa) at the Desert of Scetis.	ABEJ
			3) Nativity of Jesus Christ.	G
30	23	5	1) Malachi (Malâkhî), *Prophet.*	ABCDEHJ
			2) Translation of the relics of St. John the Short to the Desert of Scetis.	D
Nasî				
1	24	6	1) Eutychius (Aftîkhûs), one of the Seventy Disciples.	ABCDHJ
			2) Bishoi (Bishaî) of Antioch, *Mart.*	ABHJ
2	25	7	1) Titus (Tîtus), *Apostle.*	ABDEHJ
			2) Isai, brother of Apa Hor, *Mart.*	C
3	26	8	1) Raphael (Rûfâîl), *Archangel.*	ABCDHJ
			2) Andronas (Andarîânûs), *Mart.*	AB
4	27	9	1) Poemen (Bîmîn), *Hermit.*	ABDHJ
			2) Liberius (Lîbârîûs), *Pope of Rome.*	BHJ
			3) Inianamon.	C
5	28	10	1) James (Ya'qûb), *Bishop of Cairo.*	ABCD
			2) Amos ('Amûs), *Prophet.*	ABDHJ
			3) Barsum (Barsûm) the Naked.	ABCDHJ
6 (1)	29	11	1) Thanksgiving to God the Exalted.	ABC

(1) The month of Nasî has six days, if the year is a Leap Year.

The following comparative summary of the commemorations of nine editions of the Coptic Synaxarium is divided into five main divisons. The Biblical Era, the Patriarchs and Bishops, the Martyrs of the Church, the Ascetes and other Saints, and Historical Events. The Biblical Era is subdivided into commemorations of the Old Testament prophets, commemorations relating to the person and work of Christ, commemoraticns of the Holy Cross and the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem, commemorations of the archangels. In this connection we should remember, that the archangel Michael is commemorated on the 12th of each Coptic month. Listed also under the heading « Biblical Era » are the commemorations of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The monthly commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary is observed on the 21st of each Coptic month. The commemorations of the Twelve or Seventy Apostles conclude the study of the Biblical Era.

The commemorations of the Patriarchs and Bishops have been subdivided according to their respective ecclesiastical origin : Alexandrian, Greek, Syrian, Armenian, Roman and Persian. The commemorations of the Martyrs of the Church are subdivided into the general martyrs belonging from the first to the fourth century, prior to the Edict of Toleration, and the new martyrs belonging to the period following the Arab Conquest. The commemorations of the Ascetes, and other Saints fall into four subdivisions. Monks, nuns, saints and imperial saints. By the last group we mean those Emperors, Kings and Queens who are remembered on account of their Christian witness. The last division deals with historical events. The oecumenical or local councils of the church, church-historical events and secular events. Among the secular events which are commemorated in the Coptic Synaxarium we find an earthquake in Old Cairo in 1112 A.D., the eclipse of the sun in 1242 A.D., the arrival of Arianus the Governor in Akhmîm, and the occupation of the western part of Egypt by the Ethiopians.

A COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

OF THE COMMEMORATIONS OF NINE EDITIONS OF THE COPTIC SYNAXARIUM

	Biblical Era						Patriarchs & Bishops						Martyrs		Ascetes & Others				Hist. Events		
Sources	Old Testament	Christ	Holy Cross and Sepulchre	Archangels	B.V.M.	Apostles 12 and 70	Alex.	Greek	Syrian	Armen.	Roman	Persian	General	New	Monks	Nuns	Saints	Imperial Saints	Church Councils	Ch. Hist. Events	Secular Events
A	31	16	4	13	24	49	97	20	9	5	6	4	184	7	63	13	68	8	8	4	4
B	30	19	3	11	16	52	91	20	9	6	9	4	183	8	67	11	72	9	8	4	4
C	33	16	3	8	13	45	87	17	8	8	7	2	149	5	58	9	54	7	8	5	2
D	34	21	3	10	15	48	90	20	9	6	8	3	174	6	60	10	61	9	9	3	5
E	29	19	3	10	14	39	72	18	6	4	5	3	176	5	64	12	59	11	5	7	5
F	16	14	3	6	12	24	48	8	8	4	7	3	84	4	34	6	28	3	8	0	3
G	24	16	3	8	14	28	40	8	4	3	2	1	85	4	31	4	38	5	3	0	2
H	32	19	3	8	15	47	83	20	9	5	8	2	159	6	57	9	58	9	8	4	4
J	34	21	4	14	17	47	86	20	9	5	8	2	169	5	60	10	64	8	9	4	4

3. THE MAJOR CATHOLIC FEASTS IN EGYPT

In addition to Sundays, the following are the Major Feasts of the various Rites of the Catholic Church in Egypt.

			Armenian	Chaldaean	Coptic	Melkite	Latin	Maronite	Syrian
January	1	Circumcision of our Lord	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
»	6	Epiphany	°	°	°	°	°	°	°
»	7	Second Day of Epiphany				x			
February	2	Purification of the Virgin	x	x		x			x
»	9	St. Maron						°	
March	9	St. Ephraem							°
»	19	St. Joseph		x			x	x	x
»	25	Annunciation	x	x		°			
April	*	Easter Monday	x	x		x			x
»	*	Easter Tuesday				x			
»	23	St. George		x					
May	15	Our Lady of the Fields		x					
»	*	Ascension	°	°	°	°	°	°	°
June	*	Whitmonday				x			
»	*	Corpus Christi		x		x	x	x	x
»	29	SS. Peter and Paul		x	°	x	x	x	x
July	3	St. Thomas			x				
J	*	St. Gregory the Illuminator	°						
August	6	Transfiguration		x		x	x		
»	15	Assumption of the Virgin	°	°	°	°	°	°	°
»	29	St. Bartholomew			x				

* Movable feasts.

° Feasts of Obligation according to the 1962 ruling. The Chaldaean Rite in Egypt observe the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima (Oct. 13) as Day of Obligation.

			Armenian	Chaldaean	Coptic	Melkite	Latin	Maronite	Syrian
September	8	Nativity of the Virgin	x	x		x	x		
»	14	Exaltation of the Cross		x		x		x	
November	1	All Saints			x		o	x	x
»	21	Presentation of the Virgin				x			
December	8	Immaculate Conception		x	x		x	x	x
»	9	Immaculate Conception	x			x			
»	25	Christmas	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
»	26	Day after Christmas		x		x			
	27	St. Stephen		x					

4. THE MAJOR GREEK ORTHODOX FEASTS

In addition to Sundays, the following are the Major Greek Orthodox Feasts :

January	1	Circumcision of Our Lord and Feast of St. Basil
»	6	Epiphany
»	7	Feast of St. John the Baptist
»	30	Feast of the Three Hierarchs (SS. Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian)
February	2	Presentation of Our Lord
March	25	Annunciation
April	23	Feast of St. George
	*	Easter Monday
May	21	Feast of SS. Constantine and Helena
»	*	Ascension
	*	Whit monday

* Movable feasts.

June	24	Nativity of St. John the Baptist
»	29	Feast of SS. Peter and Paul
»	30	Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles
July	1	Feast of the Unmercenary Saints (SS. Cosmas and Damian)
»	20	Feast of Elijah the Prophet
August	6	Metamorphosis (Transfiguration)
»	15	Dormition of the Holy Virgin Mary
»	29	Decapitation of St. John the Baptist
September	8	Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
»	14	Exaltation of the Holy Cross
October	26	Feast of St. Demetrius
November	1	Second Feast of the Unmercenary Saints
»	8	Feast of St. Michael and All Archangels
»	21	Entry of the Holy Virgin Mary into the Temple
»	25	Feast of St. Catherine
»	30	Feast of St. Andrew
December	4	Feast of St. Barbara
»	5	Feast of St. Sabas
»	6	Feast of St. Nicholas
»	12	Feast of St. Spyridon
»	25	Nativity of Our Lord
»	26	Synaxis of the Holy Virgin Mary
»	27	Feast of St. Stephen

5. THE MAJOR ARMENIAN ORTHODOX FEASTS

In addition to Sundays, the following are the Major Armenian Orthodox Feasts :

January	6	Epiphany (Nativity and Epiphany)
»	13	Circumcision of Our Lord
»	14*	Feast of St. John the Baptist
April	7	Annunciation

* These feasts are transferred to the following Sunday.

May	**	Ascension
June	**	Dedication of the Cathedral at Echmiadzin
July	**	Feast of St. Gregory the Illuminator
August	15*	Assumption of the Virgin
September	8	Nativity of the Virgin XX
»	14*	Exaltation of the Cross
November	21	Presentation of the Virgin
December	9	Immaculate Conception
»	26	Feast of St. Stephen

The Feast of the Transfiguration (Vartavar)

The Feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ, besides being a religious feast, is one which has special national significance for the Armenians. While the Byzantines and the Latins celebrate it on the 6th of August, the Armenians at one time used to celebrate it on the 6th of August, the day on which was observed the great pagan feast Vartavar. However, in the course of time, the Armenians began to celebrate the Assumption of the Holy Virgin in August, instead of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ, which was transferred to the fourteenth week after Easter. Though the Feast of the Transfiguration was separated from the traditional date of Vartavar, the traditional festivities of this ancient feast were retained and attached to the festivities of the Christian feast.

The Feast of the Varaka Cross (Hripsimiants)

In 300 A.D., during the persecution of the first Christians in Armenia by Dirtade I, a group of 37 young virgins (later known as the Hripsimian Virgins) under the leadership of Lady Cayane, departed from their residence at the

* These feasts are transferred to the following Sunday.
** Movable feasts.

Hociats Monastery, having first given a small piece of the Cross which they had cherished to the monks living there. The latter buried this piece of the Cross at the side of the Varaka Mountain. Meanwhile the virgins, having descended the mountain, reached an empty barn where they settled. However, they were soon discovered by the king's men, who surrounded the place. One of the virgins named Hripsime was known for her great beauty and kindness. The king, hearing about her, asked her hand in marriage. Her persistent refusal to marry a pagan enraged the king, who subsequently ordered all the virgins to be put to death. The Feast of the Varaka Cross is special to the Armenians, and it is celebrated on the first Sunday following the 28th of September.

The Commemoration of the Vartanants and Ghevontiants

In 430 A.D., Armenia became subject to the Sassanid dynasty of Persia, and the Armenians had to pay tribute to the Persians and to provide them with soldiers. In 449 A.D., Hazgerd II of Persia issued a decree, ordering all his Christian subjects to become fire-worshippers (Zoroastrians). Upon this, the Armenians sent a letter to the Persian king informing him that nothing would make them change their faith, not even fire, sword or the angels.

The Governor of Armenia, who had been appointed by the Persians, went to the Persian capital together with a group of ministers, princes and the general Vartan Mamigonian. However, they soon realized the trap into which they had fallen. So, feigning acceptance of fire-worship as their new religion, they returned to Armenia in order to save the people from the enemy. Already, however, groups of pagan priests had been sent there to convert the Armenians. Ghevont Yerets, one of the archbishops of the time, led the inhabitants of Ankegh against the pagan priests and the latter were conquered. The entire nation now rose like a single man to prepare for a battle against the Persians. Sub-

sequently, a battle took place near Avarair, where 60,000 Armenians fought with 200,000 Persians. The Armenians were defeated, and the General Vartan, who had been their commander-in-chief, was killed, together with 1,035 soldiers. During the following days, the Persians captured nine of the Christian leaders, amongst them the Catholicus and the Archbishop Ghevont Yerets, who had been one of the most eminent religious figures in Armenian history. These took them to the desert, where they were murdered, after having been subjected to tortures.

Although the Armenians were defeated, the battle of Avarair (known as Vartanants) is considered one of the greatest moral victories of the Armenians, for not only did the enemy fail to make the Christians apostatize, but the Armenians continued the struggle for 33 years, and finally crushed the enemy force and obtained the Treaty of Nvarssak in 485 A.D. Thus Vartanants represents one of the most glorious pages in Armenian history. To this day, the Armenian Church commemorates the Vartanants every year on the 21st of February.

The martyrdom of the nine religious leaders (Ghevontiants) is commemorated on the 19th of February.

The Commemoration of April 24th, 1915

The last Armenian Kingdom in Armenia was destroyed by the Seljouks in 1048, while the last Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia (New Armenia) was brought to an end by the Ottoman Turks in 1375. Armenia was then subjected to Turkish rule. Thus began the darkest and longest eclipse in Armenian history.

The year 1915 represents the greatest tragedy in Armenian history, for the Turkish government under the leadership of Talaat, Enver and Jemal organized a systematic annihilation of the Armenians. The operation of this plan began by the arrest and murder of the Armenian intellectuals on the night of April 24th, 1915, when about 300 peo-

ple were killed in one night. After that, the mass massacre of the Armenian nation began. They were driven in the direction of the deserts of Mesopotamia. Under the supervision of armed guards, the people were forced to walk for miles night and day. Old people, children and pregnant women, who could not continue to walk, were flogged to death. All along the way, bands of Turkish soldiers attacked the people continuously.

To this day, Armenians all over the world commemorate the one million Armenians who died in 1915. Every year, on the 24th of April, the Armenian Church celebrates a Requiem Liturgy for all those who perished in the days of persecution.

The Commemoration of May 28th, 1918

In March 1917, following the Russian Revolution, the Kerensky government established a special committee for Transcaucasia. However, early in 1918, Transcaucasia declared itself independent of Russia, and a government was set up in Tiflis under the name of the Democratic Federal Republic of Transcaucasia. It was made up of Armenians, Georgians and the Tartars of Azerbaidjan, but it lasted only for five weeks.

On May 15th the Turks attacked with their army, and after a fierce encounter with the Armenians, entered Alexandropol (now Leninakan). The Armenians employed what strength they could muster, and under the command of General Silikian and General Tro counter-attacked the exposed Turkish positions. They fought for five days, from May 23rd to May 28th, and defeated the Turks. Meanwhile, the federation was renounced, and both Georgia and Azerbaidjan declared their independence.

After having expelled the enemy from their country the Armenians declared their land an independent republic. In great contrast to the 24th of April, 1915, the 28th of May, 1918, is a glorious and happy day for many Armenians.

6. SOME THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE COPTIC MULID

The Coptic mûlid is a religious feast in honour of a Saint or in commemoration of a historical or mythological event. Some of the ancient customs and practices associated with the mûlid are now being slowly replaced, and educational and religious films are taking the place of the performances of magicians and « Punch and Judy » shows. At the same time, however, the mûlid is and will remain an integral part of the religious life of the Egyptians. For our understanding of Christian Egypt Ancient and Modern, it is imperative that we devote some space in this widespread institution.

The literature pertaining to our study of the Coptic mûlid is limited. It might be advisable, therefore, to introduce the subject-matter by mentioning briefly the most significant studies. The principal work on the Egyptian mawâlid, is mainly concerned with the Islamic mûlid, though the Nile Mission Press, 1941. This very comprehensive study, which enumerates and describes a large number of mawâlid, is mainly concerned with the Islamic mûlid, though the Coptic mawâlid of St. George, St. Dimiana, St. Barsum the Naked and the Holy Virgin are briefly mentioned. McPherson, greatly involved in his subject, provides the reader with excellent phenomenological descriptions of the mawâlid. Two articles by Elie Sidawy are important contributions in this context. Sidawy's account « Sitti Dimiana, sa légende, son mouled » in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Egypte,* VIII (1917), 78-99, is a description of the annual mûlid in honour of St. Dimiana near Bilqâs, based upon a visit by the author in 1913. His article « Le mouled d'Abou-Guerg » in *Revue du Monde Egyptien,* I (1921), 146-152, 225-234, provides us with the history and topography of the area of Kafr Abû Guerg and introduces explanations of the traditions, beliefs and parallels of the mûlid of St. George. Another local account of a mûlid was written by George Legrain «Abou Seifein et les fous» in *La Revue Egyptienne,* I, 9, (Sept. 1912),

257-263. In addition to a description of the locality of Qamûla north of Luxor, Legrain mentions exorcisms and healings, miraculous manifestations and displays, which are an integral part of the Coptic mûlid. An article entitled « An ancient Egyptian custom illustrated by a modern survival » by Winifred S. Blackman and published in *Man,* XXV, 38 (May 1925), 65-67, discusses the rite of dedication of the tufts of children's hair to Islamic shaikhs and Coptic saints. Popular narratives of the mûlid of St. George at Mît Damsîs have been published by F. Labib in *al-Musawwar* of September 5, 1958 and September 4, 1959.

Equally significant are the descriptions of the Coptic mawâlid in some of the anthropological and sociological studies of the Egyptians. Thus, S.H. Leeder, *Modern Sons of the Pharaohs, A Study of the Manners and Customs of the Copts of Egypt.* London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1914, provides us with interesting accounts of the mawâlid of St. Barsum the Naked at Ma'sara, St. George, at Mît Damsîs and St. Dimiana at Bilqâs in his chapter « The Marvels of the Saints' tombs, and their Birthday Fairs ». Winifred S. Blackman, *The Fellahin of Upper Egypt.* London : George Harrap and Co., 1927, deals with the institution of the mûlid in her chapters « Muslim Sheikhs and Coptic Saints » and « Some Annual Festivals ». The standard work on *The Fellahin* by Henry Habib-Ayrout, Cairo : R. Schindler, 1943, does not give any direct reference to the mûlid, though « a note on mourning customs », which are typical at the Coptic mûlid, is added to the book. Moreover, my study on *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts,* Cairo : The American University at Cairo Press, 1961, refers to the mûlid of the Holy Virgin at the Dair al-Muharraq as well as the mûlid of St. Dimiana. In both instances I offer brief descriptions.

Among the mediaeval writers, both the 13th century topographer Abû Sâlih, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt,* ed. B.T.A. Evetts, Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1895, and the 15th century Islamic historian al-Maqrîzî in his concluding sections of the *Khitat,* refer to numerous celebrations of the Copts in honour of their saints.

Certainly, there are more accounts of Coptic mawâlid, especially in the literature of the pilgrims and voyageurs. To assemmble those data and references, however, does not fall within the scope of the present study.

Wherever we discover a certain transcendentality of the Divine, wherever a group of believers worships God or the gods as the wholly and totally Other, man has ever sought the help of intermediaries for spiritual communication. These, on the one hand, reveal the will and purpose of God, and, on the other hand, are capable of listening sympathetically to the needs of the believers. These intermediaries may take the form of angels, as, for example, in post-exilic Judaism, or they may take the form of historical or mythological personages who may be saints, martyrs or confessors of the community of the believers. This divine transcendentalism is in many, if not in most instances, one of the theological phenomena which I shall call the « official religion ».

In our case, the religion under discussion is that of Coptic Orthodox Christianity, the « official religion » which has its theological foundations in the Canon of the Holy Scriptures, the decisions of the first three Oecumenical Councils and the teachings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. On the other hand, the « popular religion » with its less sophisticated forms of expression has from ancient times centered around more tangible objects of veneration and worship. This means that in the Nile Delta and Valley, as well as everywhere else, we can discover two types of Christian belief and practices. The « official belief » is set forth in the accepted doctrines of the Coptic Orthodox Church and published in the handbooks on dogmatics, in theological treatises or in the catechism. This type of belief is a predominantly intellectual encounter with the teachings of the Church, and as such, the appeal of the « official religion » is by its very nature limited to the more sophisticated and the educated. The masses, therefore, who are unable to comprehend and

understand the revealed truths which are couched in abstract thought-forms and patterns, have no other choice but to follow the more primitive religious patterns of their ancestors. In response to direct evangelization and social pressure, these patterns then become christianized, yet within their ancestral frame of reference, a process which both from a theological as well as from a sociological point of view should never be ignored.

The religion of the masses, *i.e.* the « popular religion », has expressed itself in many instances in sub-Christian forms, maintaining tenuously the cultus and the institutions of the past. Thus we discover that often one or two centuries after the process of Christianization, the old forms and patterns were filled with new religious content, which was borrowed from certain aspects of the « official religion » of the new cultus. Thus, for example, the *crux ansata,* the Pharaonic *signum vitae* was not employed in its definite Christian context, *i.e.* representing the « official religion » of salvation through the vicarious death of Christ, before the 5th or 6th century, or one or two centuries subsequent to the Christianization of the Nile Valley. In this context, O'Leary's observation is quite correct when he says that « it is tempting to suppose that deity, martyr and sheikh are the same person under changed names and titles » (1).

Indeed, in some instances it has been well illustrated that the Christian saint, martyr or confessor occupied the place of a Pharaonic deity, and that his place is now taken by a Muslim shaikh. P.D. Scott-Moncrieff had pointed out, *e.g.* that there is much likelihood of seeing in the Egyptian Horus spearing the crocodile not only the prototype of St. George spearing the dragon, but also of many of the warrior-saints, like St. Mercurius, St. Theodore and St. Menas, all of whom are so popular among the Copts (2). Thus, the Pharaonic deity, retaining even its cultus characteristics, merely adopted a Hellenistic-Christian garb. The fact that

(1) O'Leary, De Lacy, *The Saints of Egypt.* London, 1937, 13.

(2) Scott-Moncrieft, P.D., *Paganism and Christianity in Egypt.* Cambridge, 1913, 137/140.

this process of cult transference continued well into the Islamic era is illustrated by the transformation of certain Christian cults into Islamic ones. In Luxor, for example, there are two mosques built on the sites of former Christian shrines. The Shrine of St. Shânâzhûm, a saint who is commemorated by the Copts on the 20th of Hatûr, was transformed into the Mosque of Shaikh al-Meqasqiche, which also enclosed the tomb of the venerated shaikh. St. Dalacina, co-martyr of St. Shânâzhûm of the Diocletian persecution, became the « Bint al-Kaisar » who married the highly venerated Shaikh Abû'l-Haggag, whose mosque is situated within the Temple dedicated to the Theban-Triad, Amûn, Mût and Khons. St. Sophronius, a soldier of al-Hifa near Luxor, and decapitated by Arianus the Governor is no one else but Shaikh Ouachi, whose modest tomb is situated near Luxor Hotel. About 20 km. north-west of Cairo is situated the small village of Ausîm, in the 9th century an important episcopal See. The History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church mentions the famous bishop of Ausîm, Anbâ Mûsâ, who suffered persecution and torture during the reign of Marwân II (744-750 A.D.) (1), and who was buried in Ausîm. Over the centuries, the tomb of the bishop was transformed into the tomb of a Muslim shaikh, known as Sidi Mûsâ. Still Christians and Muslims venerate the shrine alike. A similar transformation also occurred with regard to the episcopal Cathedral of St. George in Ausîm, which nowadays is the Great Mosque. The large red granite and marble columns which are used as thresholds of the principal entrance to the mosque are silent witnesses to an even more ancient construction, probably a Pharaonic temple, which at one time occupied this site. Both Christians and Muslims believe that the water of the well in the north-west portion of the mosque has therapeutic qualities, a belief which no doubt can be traced back to the days when the site was occupied by a church. Similar transformations have occurred throughout Egypt, thus we find, e.g. that the Mosque of al-Lamati, in the southern part of Minya, used to be at one time the Church

(1) HPCC, *Patr. Or.* V. Michael I (743-767).

of St. George al-Malatî, and tne Mosque of Sitt Nimelah in the old section of Minya is said to have been the Church of Sitt Dimiana. In all these instances, the cultus locality was retained, though a new content was given to the religious practices on account of the spread of Islâm in the respective environment.

With the advent of Christianity in the Nile Delta and Valley, the cult of the Pharaonic deities was soon replaced by the masses with historical or fictitious accounts of saints and martyrs, many of whom belonged to the Alexandrian Hellenistic rather than to the Egyptian world. Historical and legendary personages and events which could be locally identified in either the Nile Valley or the Delta became increasingly objects of veneration and worship. Thus, the *vita* of a saint, related to the town or village of a certain community, and pregnant with the miraculous, provided a significantly more tangible object of religious identification than the abstract dogmas of the « official religion ». That this practice was very widespread in the 5th and 6th century, about two centuries following the evangelization of the Nile Valley, can be clearly seen from the outspoken and harsh words of rebuke and condemnation by St. Shenute (Anbâ Shanûdah),who severely criticized the Christian villagers for inventing patron-saints and erecting shrines for the bones discovered and assumed to be relics of martyrs. (1)

At one time, almost every settlement in the Nile Delta and Valley had its local shrine or shrines to which the believers made their annual or semi-annual pilgrimages. These pilgrimages were made in commemoration of the « birthday » of a saint or some other historical event related to the particular locality. With regard to the birthday, *i.e.* mûlid of the saint, it is important for us to remember that the religious attitudes of the Copts were and still are fundamentally eschatologically directed, a factor which no doubt was instrumental in the ready acceptance of an eschatologically accentuated religion like Christianity. Therefore, the Coptic

(1) Leipoldt, J., *Schenute von Atripe und die Entstehung des national-aegyptischen Christentums.* Leipzig. 1903.

Church, like her sister churches throughout the ancient world, saw in the martyrdom of one of her saints his birthday, the *natalitia or genethlion,* and it was only in the 4th century or even later, that the idea of the martyrium was transformed into that of the *depositio* or burial. For that matter, the Copts still interpret the mawâlid of their saints as the « second births », the birth into the Life Everlasting. In this respect, the commemoration of the Coptic mûlid differs from that of the Islamic mûlid, which is held in honour of the natural birth of the shaikh.

Today, the dates for the Coptic mawâlid are generally determined by the Coptic Synaxarium. No doubt, the synaxarium or martyrology had its origin in local martyrologies which may date back to the 4th or 5th centuries. The celebration of the birthday of a certain saint in an influential community, which may have replaced a pre-Christian feast, may thus have determined the establishment of a definite date for this saint and its subsequent introduction into the local and general synaxarium.

With regard to the historical events which are celebrated by the community, their determination of date and origin is more difficult to establish. In this connection, one may mention the numerous mawâlid in honour of the Coming of the Holy Family into Egypt, an event which is celebrated in many places, especially in the Nile Valley on the 25th of Bashons. In such cases I was told that it was on this particular day that the Holy Family lodged among the villagers, and that Christ blessed the waters of the village-well while the Holy Virgin rested under a certain palm-tree. It seems that the date of the Feast of the Coming of the Holy Family into Egypt is somehow related to a forecast of the annual inundation of the Nile, which means that this feast may be a survival of a pre-Christian fertility celebration. Thus, for example, al-Maqrîzî, the 15th century Islamic historian, informs us that on the night of the 25th of Bashons the people would assemble in the Monastery of Jesus near Ishnîn al-Nasârah to remove the stone-cover from the well, when they would discover that the water within had risen and began to

sink again (1). This observation would help them to determine how high the Nile would rise that year. A similar practice at the same locality is recorded by de Maillet, the French Consul-General, who visited this village in 1703 and observed how the Copts foretold the height of the annual inundation. A cotton cord, marked at regular intervals by threads of white and blue, was let down into the well, so that the end touched the water. Then a table was placed over the mouth of the well, and the bishop celebrated the Divine Liturgy. When the Liturgy was finished, the table was removed and the cord was examined. According to Coptic belief, the height to which the water had penetrated the cord marked the expected height of the inundation of the Nile (2). Doubtless we have here a reference to an ancient form of a Nilometer, the function of which was to forecast the probable financial gain or loss on account of the expected height of the Nile.

A similar relationship between the inundation of the Nile and a mythological-religious event is well illustrated by Siegfried Morenz (3). Commenting on a 5th century Coptic manuscript on the history of Joseph the Carpenter, the husband of the Holy Virgin Mary, Morenz comes to the conclusion that Joseph had taken the place of Osiris, who used to be worshipped as a Nile deity. Thus, for example, the legendary details of the death of Joseph appear analogous to those of the death of Osiris. At the death of Joseph, Jesus sits at his head, while Mary sits at his feet, whereas in the case of Osiris, Horus stands at the head and Isis at the feet of the deceased deity. Indeed, « the myth of the destiny of Osiris in the circle of his own has been transferred to Joseph and the Holy Family ». Moreover, the 26th of Apip, the day of an ancient Nile-feast commemorating the inundation of the Nile in Lower Egypt was absorbed in the Coptic Synaxarium as the Feast commemorating St. Joseph. Though the feast

(1) Evetts B.T.A., *Account of the Monasteries and Churches of the Christians of Egypt*, Oxford, 1895, 131.

(2) Meinardus, O., *In the Steps of the Holy Family from Bethlehem to Upper Egypt*, Cairo, 1963, 39.

(3) Morenz, S., *Die Geschichte von Joseph dem Zimmermann*, Berlin, 1951

used to be celebrated every year near the Nilometer in Cairo, upon inquiry among the Copts in Cairo, I was unable to obtain any confirmation as to its present practice. Nevertheless, this study shows very clearly the process of transformation from nature-bound ancient Egyptian religious motives to their mythological substitutes of the Christian era.

Among the essential characteristics of the Coptic mûlid are certain miraculous manifestations which are to assure the pilgrims of the supernatural character of the feast. These phenomena have had a long history and are expected to occur annually. They are regarded as a proof of divine approval of the feast, and as such they are considered to be of greatest importance. Generally speaking, these miraculous displays can be divided into two categories, *i.e.* those pertaining to individual pilgrims, for example, therapies, exorcisms, the granting of fertility to barren women or the restoration of lost or stolen objects to the owner, and those which are shared by all and which are of an impersonal nature.

Commencing with the second category, the most frequent expectation is the annual apparition of the saint at the time of the mûlid. Many pilgrims, both educated and illiterate, to the Churches of St. George at Mît Damsîs in the Nile Delta and at Biba in the Nile Valley on the 23rd of Barmûdah have testified to have seen visions of St. George riding on his horse. Leeder mentions the mûlid of Barsûm al-'Arîân which is attended by many people who make the pilgrimage in the hope to see the shadow of the saint pass across the wall of the church. A detailed account of these apparitions is given by Leeder (1). Visitors and pilgrims to the mûlid of Sitt Dimîânâ on the 12th of Bashons have testified to the apparitions of the patron-saint in a small window of the dome of the church. In this connection, I shall quote the 17th century priest and traveller Johann Michael Wansleben who visited the shrine in 1672, and after carefully watching the apparitions, concluded that they were merely shadows of

(1) Leeder, S.H., *Modern Sons of the Pharaohs*, London, 1914, 137-140.

passing objects (1). These apparitions at the mûlid of St. Dimiana were also exposed by Dr. Gulian Lansing (1863) (2). Yet, in spite of the exposures by travellers and emancipated Copts, the masses of the pilgrims still adhere to the preconceived notion that no mûlid can be successful without the occurrence of some sensational manifestation. This is true throughout Egypt. Legrain, for example, mentions, that St. Mercurius appears every year in the night of the 25th of Abîb, the Feast of the Consecration of the Church of Abû Saifain, to the pilgrims who attend the mûlid of Abû Saifain at Qamûla, where the tomb of the warrior-saint is venerated (3).

At the Monastery of St. George west of Dimuqrat near Asfûn I was told by the local priests that every year at the time of the mûlid a large number of pigeons fly in the form of the cross over the monastery and that this phenomenon is regarded as proof of the divine pleasure for the celebration and festivities of the pilgrims. At the famous Church of the Holy Virgin at Gabal al-Tair many accounts of supernatural and sensational events are related by the pilgrims. That this mûlid goes back to the early Middle Ages is attested by the reference in the 13th century account of Abû Sâlih who states that « a festival is kept here on the 21st of Tûbah, the day of the Falling Asleep of the Holy Virgin, when a large congregation assembles » (4). Nowadays, at the time of this mûlid, pilgrims from as far as Asyût and Cairo attend the celebrations, and over 10,000 pilgrims are estimated to come to this feast (5). The pilgrims say that on the day of the mûlid, the church is lit up without anyone switching on the electric light, a sign that God wants the church to appear in all its splendour. The miraculous appearance of light is a

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(1) Cf. Vansleb, J.M., *Nouvelle Relation en forme de Journal d'un voyage fait en Egypte...*, Paris, 1677.

(2) Cf. Lansing, G., *Egypt's Princess.* Philadelphia, 1864.

(3) Legrain, G., « *Abou Seifein et les fous* », *La Revue Egyptienne* I, 9. 257f.

(4) Evetts, B.T.A., *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt.* Oxford, 1895, 218.

(5) Meinardus, O., *op. cit.*, 45.

typical manifestation among the Copts. In his account of the Church of St. Victor at Gizah, Abû Sâlih mentions that « a light was seen to proceed from the picture of the Lady in the apse of the church on several occasions, and this thing became celebrated and was talked of by many of the faithful » (1). In the *History of the Patriarchs* it is related that the priest of Dahshûr cut off the top of the wick of the icon-lamp of St. George and while waiting for the sacristan to bring him a lamp in order that he might light it there descended upon the church a white light in three places, and the light lightened the wick (2). I have heard the monks of the Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs relate numerous stories of the miraculous lighting of the candles in the Church of St. Mark within the monastery. The light, no doubt, is identified with Christ, « Who is the Light » (St. John VIII, 12), and Who therefore is considered to be the master over the times and places to be illuminated by the light. The display of the extraordinary, the sensational, the miraculous, as it is experienced by the majority, if not by all pilgrims, is an essential characteristic of the Coptic mûlid.

In addition, the Coptic mawâlid attract every year large numbers of psychoneurotics, epileptics, hysteria-paralytics and mentally disturbed pilgrims, who come to the feasts expecting to be healed. It is believed that on account of the merits acquired by the saints, God will accept their intercessions and restore the sick. True, the intercessory functions of the Coptic saints are divided, though one should not expect these divisions to be as exact or detailed as in the Latin or Byzantine Churches. Generally speaking, the Copts refer to St. George or to any other of the warrior-saints to cast out evil spirits, whereas they refer to the Holy Virgin or St. Dimiana to grant fruitfulness to barren women and blessings upon children. St. Dimiana is also believed to be able to prevent thieves from stealing and to return stolen goods to the rightful owners. In this context it should be remembered that the Copts depend for their actual religious life only upon

(1) Evetts, B.T.A., *op. cit.*, 174.

(2) *Hist. Patr.* II, III, 358.

very few saints. The Holy Virgin and St. George are implored throughout Egypt from Alexandria to Aswân. Indeed, the devotion to the Holy Virgin is very marked among the Copts, with thirty-two feasts in her honour and an office known as the Theotokia of which there is a special one for each day of the week (1). Moreover, the dedication of churches to the Holy Virgin was and still is more frequent in Egypt than any other dedication (2). Next in popularity is St. George. To show the extent of the veneration of St. George throughout the country, Sidawy has enumerated 418 Coptic churches in the Nile Valley, 83 of which were dedicated to St. George ; and from 129 Coptic churches in the Nile Delta and in Cairo, 30 churches were dedicated to St. George (3).

Since most pilgrims ascribe their diseases to various forms of demon-possession, St. George and the warrior-saints St. Mercurius and St. Menas are most frequently implored for purposes of exorcism. What actually happens, using psychoanalytical terminology, is that by means of individual and mass suggestion the « id », *i.e.* the « demon » is confronted with the help of the symbol, in this case the Saint with the « super-ego » of the so-called possessed. The factors of individual and mass expectation and suggestion, as well as the utter confidence in the therapeutic power of the symbol are obviously essential criteria for these exorcisms. With regard to the results, indeed, there is no question that in some cases certain therapeutic effects have been achieved.

In this context it is important for us to realize that the « popular religion », which underlies the celebrations, healings and exorcisms at the mûlid, regards demons and angels, blessings and curses as being of a tangible nature. In this sense, the « popular religion » as displayed at the Coptis mawâlid reflects many New Testament accounts, for references to

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(1) Kabes, J., « La dévotion à la Sainte Vierge dans l'Eglise Copte, » *Les Cahiers Coptes*, II, (1952), 4-7.

(2) More than 55 churches of the Holy Virgin are mentioned by Abû Sâlih (13th cent.).

(3) Sidawy, E., « Le mouled d'Abou-Guerg, » *Revue du monde Egyptien*, I, (1921), 225-234.

demon-possession are deeply imbedded in both the Gospel of St. Mark and Q, the two oldest documents. True, it is difficult for the emancipated person to appreciate the tangible nature *e.g.* of barakeh (blessing or healing virtue), yet, both in the New Testament (St. Mark I : 23/26, V : 1/15, VIII : 24/30, IX : 17/27, *Acts* XVI : 16/18) as well as at Coptic mawâlid the blessings which are received are considered as tangible additions to the personality, while he who grants the blessings feels the loss of them (*St. Mark V* : 30). In the 8th century, the faithful Copts would follow the Patriarch Khaîl I (744-768) and would cut off pieces of his patriarchal robes for the sake of a blessing. A Coptic priest, who claimed to have the power to exorcise, told me that whenever he had cast out demons or laid his hands upon the sick, he felt an acute need to « re-charge » by celebrating the Divine Liturgy or by withdrawing to the mountain, i.e. the desert.

Because of the supposed tangibility of the demons and evil spirits, some provision for their exit is frequently made. In some instances, the demons are supposed to depart through the toes or some other part of the body, leaving some spots of blood on the white robe of the pilgrim. Often, these spots take on the form of a cross (1).

The practice of casting out demons was and still is a reputable profession, the origin of which is deeply imbedded in Middle Eastern culture.

Furthermore, the mawâlid afford an occasion for certain rites and ceremonies, which are part of the « official religion ». Thus, the pilgrims take their infants to the mawâlid for the purpose of baptism and chrismation, which according to the doctrines of the Coptic Church are sacraments of regeneration and sanctification. At the mûlid of the Holy Virgin on the 21st of Baûnah at the Dair al-Muharraq (2), over three hundred infants were recently baptized.

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(1) Meinardus O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts*, 373.

(2) In commemoration of the consecration of the Church of the Holy Virgin in Philippi.

A common sight at the Coptic mûlid is the village barber, whose function is to circumcise the boys prior to baptism. The Copts strongly prohibit the circumcision to be performed after baptism, except in the case of girls who are circumcised before the age of twelve. For that matter, I have heard it being said, that the sacrament of baptism would actually be annulled by the operation. The practice of circumcision prior to baptism is canonically laid down in the 11th century Canons of Cyril II, 67th Patriarch of Alexandria (1).

Before circumcision, the hands and feet of the boy are dyed with henna, and on the day before the ceremony, the barber cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, known as the *mukarras*. The tufts of the boy's hair are then dedicated to the saint in whose honour the mûlid is celebrated (2). On the day of the circumcision, the boy is dressed in his finest clothes and often a beautifully embroidered cap is placed upon his head. After the ceremony, a service is being conducted in the church. Then, sacrifices in the form of pigeons, goats and lambs are offered, the meat of which is distributed among friends and the poor.

An important aspect of the Coptic mûlid is the presentation by the pilgrims of certain votive-offerings which are attached to the principal object of veneration, either to the tomb of the saint, or to the most venerated icon. These votive-offerings may consist of a piece of cloth, a handkerchief, a tie or any other small patch of cloth. In some cases, also the first-fruits of the fields, bracelets, rings or jewelry are offered. These objects then are hung up in gratitude for the fulfilment of certain prayers. Thus, particularly women will adorn sacred sites and icons with votive offerings in gratitude for healings or the restoration of stolen or lost objects. Often candles are used as votive-offerings and at some mawâlid, one can see large numbers of candles burning in front of

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(1) Burmester, O.H.E., Khs-, *Le Muséon*, XLIX, (1936), 245-288.

(2) Blackman, W.S., « An Ancient Egyptian custom illustrated by a modern survival, » *Man* 25 : 38, (May, 1925), 65-67.

the icon of the patron-saint or in the fanes which were blessed by Christ and the Holy Family on Their Flight into Egypt, e.g. in the Church of the Holy Virgin at Musturud or the Church of St. Sergius in Old Cairo.

The relics of the saint in whose honour the mûlid is celebrated are highly venerated by the pilgrims. These relics, which consist in most instances of the bones of the patron-saint, are normally kept in long cylindrical wooden boxes covered with silk. Almost always, these bolsters are found in a niche built into the wall underneath the principal icon of the saint. At the occasion of the mûlid, predominantly women pilgrims touch and carry these bolsters in the hope and expectation of having their longings realized and fulfilled. Unfortunately, there exists a great deal of ignorance and confusion concerning the identity of these relics, for the relics of St. George, St. Mercurius, St. Dimiana and St. Theodore are claimed by a large number of Coptic churches in Cairo, the Nile Delta and the Nile Valley. In this connection, it should be remembered that the veneration of relics is an ancient practice, and the Old Testament refers to the cult of relics as seen in the religious character of the burial of saintly persons (*e.g. Genesis* XXXV : 19, 20 ; *Exodus* XIII : 19), in the miraculous power of Elias' mantle (II *Kings* II : 13, 14), and the bones of Elisha (II *Kings* XIII : 21). St. John Chrysostom refers frequently to the relics of the martyrs as sources of divine blessings (1), and, indeed, all the great doctors of the early Church extolled the veneration of the relics of the saints.

Whenever the site of the mûlid is in the vicinity of a cemetery, and this happens to be the case in many instances of mawâlid in the country, the women use this occasion to repair to the tombs of their ancestors. This visit, which is referred to as al-tal'a, is part of the celebrations. These cemeteries, which are just outside the church or the abandoned monastery on the edge of the desert, become literally

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(1) Eulogy of St. Eustathius, Migne, *Patr. Graec.*, L, 600 ; Homily on the Martyrs, *ibid.*, 648, 649; Eulogy of St. Julian, *ibid.*, 670-672.

places of mass-lamentations at the time of the mûlid. Offerings are made, and the blood of the animals is smeared over the tombs, while the meat is distributed among the poor. « Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said ».

At the Dair al-Muharraq I have seen several hundred women among the tombs mourning and lamenting, while the men and the children participated in the more joyful aspects of the mûlid. The uncontrolled expressions of grief by the Coptic women at the time of death as well as at the occasions of the mawâlid have their origin in ancient Pharaonic Egypt. Reliefs in the tomb-chapel at Saqqara and elsewhere portray wailing women in much the same attitude as the Coptic peasant women at the time of a mûlid (1). The wailing mother, who is seen so often at the mûlid, is beautifully portrayed in the tomb-chapel of Amenemhet at Thebes (2).

One of the interesting observations pertaining to the « popular religion » is its highly inclusive nature with regard to the so-called schismatic Christians and Muslims Whereas the « official religion » carefully specifies that only the right believers, *i.e.* the orthodox, are eligible to participate in the « official cultus », the « popular religion » knows of no excluding criteria. On the contrary, the « popular religion » is highly inclusive. In this sense also, it may reflect even more correctly than the « official religion » the spirit of the Gospel of St. Mark and Q. Indeed, nowadays, many a Coptic mûlid is attended by as many Muslims as Copts. This is especially true in the Nile Delta at the mûlid of St. Dimiana near Bilqâs and the mûlid of St. George at Mît Damsîs, but it is also true of the mawâlid in the Nile Valley. Leeder mentions that at the mûlid of St. Dimiana, « Moslems as well as Copts living in that part, respect this saint considerably, and believe that she is the means of granting them most im-

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(1) For an extensive bibliography of ancient Egyptian analogies of presen mourning practices, cf. Blackman, *op. cit.*, 294.

(2) Nina De Garis Davies and A.H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhet*. London, 1915, Pl. XXIV.

portant benefits, when they address themselves to her, Moslems are usually heard singing to her name, calling her : Ya Sitt ya bint al-wali » (1). The mûlid in honour of St. Barsum the Naked at al-Ma'sara, which is celebrated on the 18th of Tût, is attended annually by large numbers of Muslims who even refer to their patron as Sidi Muhammad al-'Iryân (2). Lord Curzon, the famous 19th century voyageur, called Sanutius (St. Shenute) a Muslim saint. Butler points out in this context, that the mistake arose from the fact that the Copts may have manufactured a Shaikh Abû Shanûd for the benefit of the superstitious Muslims, and thus to secure the protection and reverence of their shrine (3). Lady Duff Gordon tells a story of her visit to Bibâ where she found a mason on repairs. He told her with pride that he was a faithful Muslim of Cairo, where for three consecutive nights he had been visited by St. George who ordered him to leave his work in Cairo and proceed to Bibâ to restore his church. The mason told her how he obeyed the saint's order which was in answer to the prayers of the priest of the Church of St. George in Bibâ (4). While attending the famous mûlid of Mârî Girgis at Mît Damsîs (in August 1963), I noticed a new altar curtain in front of the central haikal of the old Church of St. George. On this curtain was embroidered the name of Muhammad 'Abbas Ibrâhîm, a merchant of the Muskî, 1962. This Muslim pilgrim had donated the altar-curtain in gratitude for his cure at the time of the mûlid in 1962. Upon request, the priest of the church showed me several altar-curtains which were offered to the church by Muslim pilgrims to the Shrine of St. George.

A significant number of the patients, dressed in their white galabiyahs and robes, who had camped for several days in the old Church of St. George, were Muslims from Cairo and

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(1) Leeder, S.H., *op. cit.*, 145.

(2) McPherson, J.W., *op. cit.*, 173.

(3) Butler, A. *The Ancient Coptic Churches.* Oxford, 1884, I, 552 n.

(4) Leeder, S.H., *op. cit.*, 137. Also, Meyer-Ranke, P. « Auch die Moslems kommen zum 'Mulid' der Christen,» *Die Welt*, Sept. 16, 1963.

Alexandria expecting to be healed. Indeed, on the level of the « popular religion » there exists a great deal of social interaction between Muslims and Christians, and only those cults of the « official religion », *i.e.* the sacraments, which are celebrated at the mûlid separate the orthodox from the schismatics and Muslims.

The following list enumerates the more important Coptic mawâlid. The sites are arranged from north to south. I am aware that this account is not complete, yet this list constitutes an attempt to give the dates and places of the principal Coptic feasts.

May 20.	Bashons 12.	St. Dimiana at Dair Sitt Dimiana, Bilqâs, Daqahliya.
August 22.	Masri 16.	St. George at Church of St. George, Mît Damsîs, Mît Ghamr.
September 17.	Tût 7.	St. Rebecca (Sitt Rifka), Sunbât, Mît Ghamr.
August 22.	Masri 16.	Holy Virgin at Church of al-'Adhrâ, Musturud, Matariya.
September 28.	Tût 18.	St. Barsum at Church of Barsûm al-'Iryân, Helwân.
Ascensiontide.		St. George at Mari Girgis, Sidmant, Fayyûm.
April 30.	Barmûdah 22.	St. Isaac at Dair Naqlûn, Fayyûm.
August 22.	Masri 16.	Holy Virgin, at Church of al-'Adhrâ, Bayad al-Nasâra, Bani Suef.
Ascensiontide		St. George at Church of St. George, Bibâ, Bani Suef.
June 1.	Bashons 24.	The Coming of the Holy Family to Egypt, Dair al-Garnûs.
Ascensiontide.		St. Theodore at Dair al-Sanquriyah, Bani Mazâr.
Ascensiontide.		St. Iskhiron at Bayahû, Samâlût.

January 29.	Tûbah 21.	Holy Virgin at Church of al-'Adhrâ, Gabal al-Tair.
August 22.	Masrî 16.	Holy Virgin at Church of al-'Adhrâ, Gabal al-Tair.
July 19.	Abîb 12.	St. Hor at Dair Apa Hor, Minya.
June 28.	Baunah 21.	Holy Virgin, at Dair al-Muharraq.
August 22.	Masri 16.	Holy Virgin at Church of al-'Adhrâ, Durunka, Asyût.
Ascensiontide.		St. George at Dair al-Hadid, Akhmîm.
November 16.	Hâtûr 7.	St. George at Dair al-Hadid, Akhmîm.
July 14.	Abîb 7.	St. Shenute at Dair Anbâ Shanûdah, Sohâg.
February 1.	Tûbah 24.	St. Bisada at Dair Apa Bisada, al-Monshah.
February 7.	Tûbah 30.	St. Palemon at Dair Anbâ Balamûn, Qasr al-Sayâd.
August 1.	Abîb 25.	St. Mercurius at Dair Abû Saifain, Qamûla.
January 20.	Tûbah 12.	St. Theodore at Dair Shahid Tadrus al-Muhareb, Medinet Habu.
November 16.	Hâtûr 7.	St. George at Dair Mari Girgis Dimuqrat, Asfûn.
December 23.	Kiahk 14.	St. Amonius at Dair Manaos wa Shuhada, Esna.

Certain Coptic mawâlid which were celebrated in the 13th century as reported by Abû Sâlih, no longer take place. In many instances, this is due to the destruction of the churches or monasteries as in the cases of the mûlid in honour of St. Arsenius on the 13th of Bashons at Gabal Turâh or the mûlid of SS. Mary and Martha on the 30th of Baunah at the Monastery of Nâhya. In other instances, the interference by the church authorities led to the cessation of the celebration as *e.g.* in the case of the Church of St. George in the Hârat

al-Rûm. This church had derived certain sanctity from the possession of the relics of St. Theodore which were held in great veneration by both Copts and Muslims. The virtues of the relics in casting out devils were publicly and solemnly put to test on Wednesday of every week, when Coptic and Muslim women resorted in great numbers to the shrine. Strange stories were told of the therapies wrought upon the believers. In 1873, however, the practices were abolished by order of the Patriarchate (1).

In conclusion it should be stated that the purely phenomenological descriptions of many interesting aspects of the Coptic mûlid have been omitted, largely because this material is found in some of the above mentioned literature. Therefore, I am quite aware of the limitations of this paper which are due to its purpose and main theme as well as the desire to avoid unnecessary repetitions.

It goes without saying that it would be of great sociological interest to study the various kinds of amusements and games at the Coptic mûlid. Indeed, one could portray a most picturesque scene by describing the distribution and sale of the higâbs, the small charms and amulets, at the entrance of the churches, the performances of the hawi or magicians, the « Punch and Judy » shows, etc. In this connection, it might be interesting to mention that many Copts identify Punch with Pontius Pilate and Judy with Judas Iscariot, who, presumably betrayed his sex as did his master, Toby, being no other than that very attractive boy, Tobias (2).

These aspects, which are so delightful, and which constitute such an integral part of the Coptic mûlid, provide a wealth of material to the student of cultural anthropology and folklore.

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(1) Butler, A., *The Ancient Coptic Churches*, Oxford, 1884, I, 281, 282.

(2) McPherson, J.W., *op. cit.*, 81.

CHAPTER VII

THE COPTIC LANGUAGE

The scribes of Pharaonic Egypt used hieroglyphic characters to write on the walls of temples and tombs, yet those symbols did not actually represent the phonetic form of the language. The hieroglyphs were partly phonetic and partly descriptive. Later, an abridged cursive form of writing was introduced which was known as the « Hieratic ». This form of writing still followed the archaic and conventional system until a third form emerged which became known as the « Demotic ».

Following the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great, Greek became and remained the official language until well after the Arab Conquest in 640 A.D. Greek was the language spoken in the famous Catechetical School in Alexandria, it was the medium of communication among the patriarchs and bishops of the early Church. It remained the official language until the days of the Governor 'Abdallah ibn Marwân (705-709 A.D.) who tried the use of Arabic in public affairs.

The Coptic language was the Egyptian vernacular language expressed in Greek characters with the addition of seven letters to represent those sounds which were unknown to the Greeks. These letters were taken over from the Demotic. Our earliest examples of Coptic are the London Horoscope of 100 A.D. and the two mummy labels of the second century from Akhmîm.

In Coptic there are five dialects : Sa'îdic, Bohairic, Fayyûmic, Akhmîmic and Subakhmîmic. Of these dialects only Bohairic is in use as the liturgical language of the Coptic Church. Sa'îdic may be considered the classical dialect, and it was widely spread in Egypt. The other three dialects belong to the districts of which they bear the name.

Though Sa'îdic was the general Coptic language until the 9th century, the Bohairic replaced the Sa'îdic, partly on account of ecclesiastical influence, and a good deal of the Sa'îdic literature then extant was translated into Bohairic. During the reign of al-Hâkim (996-1021) the Christians would still speak Coptic among themselves, and the Muslims would not know what was being said. Within one hundred years, however, there were many changes.

In the 12th century (1131), the Patriarch Gabriel II admonished the priests to explain the Lord's Prayer in the vernacular Arabic. This may mean that even at this early time Coptic was little understood by the people. In the 13th and 14th century Coptic liturgical books began to have Arabic translations side by side with the Coptic. Yet, in Upper Egypt, Coptic seems to have prevailed much longer. Al-Maqrizî (15th cent.), implies that Coptic was still spoken in the monasteries around Asyût.

It is generally believed that Coptic ceased to be a spoken language in the 17th century. To-day, there are only very few people who still use Coptic as their means of communication. There are a few Coptic communities in the vicinity of Luxor, however, which have retained in some measure the Coptic language.

Lit. : Crum, W. E., *A Coptic Dictionary*. Oxford, 1929-1939.

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Murray, M. A., *Elementary Coptic (Sa'îdic) Grammar*. London, 1927.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE PLAN OF A COPTIC CHURCH

Early Coptic churches were usually built on the plan of a basilica, but in the case of the ancient churches of Cairo, rebuilding, additions and alterations have often considerably modified the original plan. A Coptic church comprises four distinct parts ; at the west end there is the narthex, then the nave, then the choir and finally the sanctuary. In the narthex of some of the ancient churches there is a deep oblong tank sunk in the floor, and now covered over with boards. This tank was formerly used for the Service of the Blessing of the Water on the Feast of the Epiphany ; now, however, a portable basin is used for this service. The nave is normally divided into three parts by a double colonnade, the northern aisle being reserved for women. At the western end of the nave in the ancient churches there is usually the Mandatum Tank, a shallow rectangular basin sunk in the floor, and now covered over by boards. This tank was formerly used for the Service of the Foot-washing on Maundy Thursday and on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul. Nowadays, a small portable basin is used for this service. Near the eastern end of the nave is the ambon or pulpit which is usually set against the colonnade of the northern aisle. At the east end of the nave is the choir which was formerly separated from the nave by a screen. The choir extends across the whole breadth of the church. It contains seats for the singers and also two candelabra and lecterns from which the lessons are read. One or more steps lead from

the chancel into the sanctuary or haikal. The sanctuary, into which only men are allowed to enter, and then only after having removed their shoes, is separated from the rest of the church by a solid, wooden screen in the centre of which is a door before which a curtain hangs. Along the top of this screen there is usually a row of icons. In the ancient churches these screens are beautifully carved and inlaid with ebony, ivory and cedar wood. On each side of the door are two small windows. In some churches, sanctuary lamps are hung before this screen, and sometimes ostrich eggs are suspended between them. In front of the sanctuary door which is opened for the Divine Service, is hung a richly embroidered curtain. Almost all churches have three sanctuaries, each with its altar. The central sanctuary is dedicated to the Saint after whom the church is called, and contains the main altar. The northern and southern sanctuaries are used on the feast day of the Saint to whom they are dedicated, or whenever there is more than one celebration of the Divine Liturgy on the same day, since according to the Canon Law of the Coptic Church, neither the altar nor the eucharistic vessels and vestments may be used twice on the same day for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Behind the main altar there is a tribune with a throne for the bishop and seats for the officiating clergy. In the niche behind the throne there is usually a sanctuary lamp known as the perpetual lamp. The altar, which invariably stands clear in the middle of the sanctuary, is a four-sided mass of either brickwork or stone. Above the altar there is a lofty, wooden canopy upheld by pillars. Beneath the dome of this canopy there is usually a painting of Christ as Pantokrator, surrounded with the Cherubim and the Seraphim. The altar is covered with three coverings, the first a tightly-fitting case of linen or cotton reaching down to the ground, the second a red silk covering, likewise reaching to the ground and having an embroidered cross on each side, the third a white linen cloth placed on the table of the altar. At each of the four corners of the altar there is a candlestick, those on the western side shorter than the ones on the eastern side. In the middle of the altar is the ark, a box cubical in form, about

28 cms in height and 25 cms in width, the top of which is closed with hinged flaps. On the sides of this ark are paintings, the usual subjects being the Last Supper, the Holy Virgin, an Angel, and the Saint to whom the church is dedicated. In this ark the chalice is placed from the beginning of the Divine Liturgy until the time of the Holy Communion. The baptistery is normally situated at the upper end of the northern aisle, but this rule does not apply to all the ancient Coptic churches. The font is a circular basin sufficiently deep to allow the priest to immerse the infant in the water, while pronouncing the baptismal formula. The exterior of the ancient Coptic churches is always unimposing, and the entrance to them is often through a small side-door.

Lit. : Burmester, O.H.E. Kus., *A Guide to the Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo.* Cairo, 1955.

Butler, A., *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt.* 2 vols., Oxford, 1884.

CHAPTER IX

EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN ALEXANDRIA

THE PREACHING OF St. MARK

According to a tradition which, however, is constant, St. Mark the Evangelist visited Alexandria, where he preached the Gospel, founded the See of Alexandria, and on May 8, 68 A.D. received the crown of martyrdom.

> Eusebius who wrote his *Ecclesiastical History* in the first quarter of the 4th century records this tradition and states that St. Mark came to Egypt in the first or third year of the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius, in 41-42 A.D. or 43-44 A.D. If these dates are correct, St. Mark's stay at Alexandria could not have been of long duration, for in 46 A.D. he was at Antioch and the following year in Cyprus. From 49-50 A.D. it seems that he was again at Antioch, and from 58-62 A.D. at Rome with St. Paul. For the intervening period between 50-62 A.D., however, the New Testament is silent in regard to St. Mark, and, therefore, it is quite possible that the Evangelist may have visited Alexandria at this time. It is generally held that, when St. Paul was released from his first captivity at Rome in 62 A.D., St. Mark did not accompany him on his new missionary journey, and this being the case, the Evangelist could very well have left Rome for Alexandria.

A martyr's chapel dedicated to St. Mark had existed in close proximity to the Eastern Harbour. During the first century and the first half of the second century, the spread

of Christianity in Alexandria and in Egypt had not been considerable. It appears that even Alexandrian Christianity was rather syncretistic. Hadrian (134 A.D.), according to his letter to Servianus, saw those Christians who worship Serapis and those who call themselves bishops of Christ devoting themselves to Serapis. Thus, Alexandrians prostrated themselves before Serapis or Christ impartially. From the beginning of the reign of Commodus (180 A.D.), the Christian religion, almost completely purified of its gnostic doctrines and of all traces of paganism, appears firmly established in Alexandria. By the time of Septimius Severus (193-211 A.D.) Christianity had begun to make history, and from this period onwards its development was very rapid. The founding of the Catechetical School of Alexandria ought to be placed into this period. It will suffice to mention only three of the most celebrated scholars of this school, Pantaenus, Clement of Alexandria and Origen.

> The Alexandrian Catechetical School endeavoured to relate Christianity to Neo-Platonism which sprang up about this time at Alexandria. Among the teachers were Amonius, Saccas, Herennius, Plotinus, Porphyrius and others.

Until the time of Constantine (313 A.D.), the Church in Egypt encountered many obstacles in the course of its existence. The conflict between church and state came to its height in Alexandria which, more than any other city in the Empire, may claim to have won the battle for Christianity. But in the meantime, the Christians suffered severely under the rule of Septimius Severus (204 A.D.), under Decius (250 A.D.), under Valerian (251 A.D.) and under Diocletian (303 A.D.).

From the 4th century onwards, Egyptian Christianity was characterized by its emphasis upon the ascetic life, and the neighbourhood of Alexandria began to be covered with monasteries, which grew more numerous as time went on. In the 5th and 6th centuries, we are told, there were no less than

six hundred of them, all built like fortresses. The group of monasteries of the Ennaton at the ninth mile-stone was the most famous.

In the 4th century, the churches in Alexandria were fairly numerous, and in the course of the 5th and the 6th centuries their numbers steadily increased. The most celebrated churches of this period were :

The Church of St. Mark

The Church of St. Mark, the martyrdom of the Evangelist, must have been near the shore of the Eastern Harbour.

> According to an early tradition, the Alexandrian Christians built a church in a place called Bucalia (cattleshed), near the sea, beside a rock from which stone is hewn. In 311 A.D., at the time of the martyrdom of Peter, the 16th Patriarch of Alexandria, the relics of St. Mark were kept at Bucalia, « ... for this is the place where was accomplished the martyrdom of the Evangelist ». In the first half of the 5th century, a new church was constructed by St. Cyril to replace the former martyrdom of St. Mark. This church was destroyed by the Arabs in the middle of the 7th century, and although Benjamin I (623-662 A.D.) had received permission to restore the church, it was not until the time of the patriarch Isaac (690-692 A.D.) that the church was rebuilt. In 828 A.D., two Venetian merchants removed the relics of the Evangelist and carried them to Venice. A few years later, the church must have fallen into ruin, only to be rebuilt by Patriarch Shenute I (859-880 A.D.). During the reign of al-Muqtadir, the church was destroyed again (912 A.D.). Christodoulus, the 66th Patriarch of Alexandria, rebuilt and consecrated the new Church of St. Mark, which was finally destroyed by the Sultan Malik al-Kâmil at the approach of the Crusaders in 1218. As the sea encroached at this part of the coast, the foundations of this church are probably submerged.

The Church of St. Michael

The Church of St. Alexander or the Church of St. Michael is considered to have been at one time the Temple of Saturn.

Some archaeologists have placed the original site into the vicinity of the present Municipality.

The Patriarch Zacharias (1004-1032) had served as priest of this church prior to his enthronement.

The Great Church

The Megale Ecclesia, Kyriakon or Dominicium took the place of the Caesareum.

> The Caesareum was a temple, begun by Cleopatra in honour of Antony, but completed by Octavian and dedicated forthwith to the worship of the emperors under the name of Caesareum or Sebasteum. In 354 A.D., Constantius II intended to present it to the church, but before the transference could be effected, St. Athanasius had held an Easter service in it. The emperor was offended. Two years later, his troops nearly killed St. Athanasius inside the building, and the emperor handed over the church to the Arians. For the following years, Arians and Orthodox fought about the sanctuary. In the 4th century, the Caesareum was dismantled and converted into a cathedral, known as the Megale Ecclesia. The Church was plundered and restored many times. In 368 A.D. it was reconstructed by St. Athanasius and dedicated to St. Michael. It became the Cathedral of Alexandria, superseding that of St. Theonas. Here, in 640 A.D., Patriarch Cyrus held a solemn service before surrendering the city to the Arabs. Later, Copts and Melkites disputed its possession until 912 A.D. at which time it disappeared in a conflagration, and its ruins were never restored.

The Church of St. Athanasius

The Church of St. Athanasius, which was constructed by the patriarch of this name in the Bendidion or Mendidion Quarter and consecrated in 370 A.D. was turned into a mosque at the time of the Arab Conquest. The Church was transformed into a large square-shaped mosque like the Mosque of Ibn Tûlûn in Cairo. The Attarine Mosque is situated in the immediate vicinity of the Place of St. Catherine, in the Suk al-Attarine.

The Church of the Holy Virgin

The oratory, known as the Theomêtôr, built by St. Theonas (282-300 A.D.) near the shore of the Eunostos Harbour was reconstructed and enlarged by the Patriarch Alexander (313-328 A.D.). After that date, the sanctuary was used as the Cathedral of St. Mary until the end of the 4th century, when the Caesareum became the cathedral. The Church of St. Theonas served for many years as the palace of the bishops. Here St. Athanasius was brought up. Under early Muslim rule, this church was turned into a mosque. The Arabs gave it the name of the Western Mosque, or the Mosque of a Thousand Pillars. Now, this historical site is reoccupied by the church and the school of the Franciscan Fathers at Rue Karam.

The Church of Sts. Cyrus and John

The Church of SS. Cyrus and John was situated east of Alexandria on the site of the modern Abûqîr.

> Following the suppression of the Serapis and Isis cults by the Patriarch Cyril I, the relics of the SS. Cyrus and John were deposited at a locality now known as Abûqîr. The relics, however, were so intermingled that they could not be separated. A church was built here in honour of the relics. The two saints remained quiet for 200 years, but then began to disentangle themselves and work miracles. With the Arab Conquest, their church vanishes, but St. Cyrus has given his name to the modern, Abûqîr (Father Cyr).

Church of St. John the Baptist

The Church of St. John the Baptist was situated on the site of the ancient Serapeum.

> The small hill on which stands Pompey's Pillar, or more correctly Diocletian's Pillar, marks the site of the Serapeum, the temple dedicated to the worship of Serapis. Following the destruction of the Serapeum by the Patriarch Theophilus (391 A.D.), a monastery was installed on the plateau and a church was dedicated to St.

John the Baptist, also known as the Angelion, which was destroyed in the 10th century. Tehodosius (535-567) built the Angelion, Anastasius (605-616), the 36th Patriarch, was a priest at the Angelion, and Andronicus (616-622), the 37th Patriarch, had served as a deacon at the Angelion.

The Church of St. Theodore

This church was in the eastern part of the city, i.e. in the Bruchium.

The Church of St. Peter the Martyr

This church was built opposite to the Serapeum.

The Church of the Archangel Raphael

This church was situated on the Island of Pharos. There were two other churches on or near the Pharos, one was the Church of St. Faustus and the other that of St. Sophia.

The Church of the Saviour

This church was built by the Patriarch Theophilus. It was burnt down and reconstructed. It was still in existence in the 11th century.

Other Churches

In addition to the above mentioned churches, we hear of a church of SS. Cosmas and Damian in Alexandria during the patriarchate of Theodosius I (535-567). The 11th century patriarch Christodoulus consecrated a church of St. John the Evangelist.

There were no vast catacombs in Alexandria. The Christian cemeteries, partly subterranean, partly open, were outside the city and were spread over the hills between Chatby and Hadra, near the Serapeum in the south-west and beyond the ancient pagan necropolis between the Abattoir and Dakhela. A very interesting tomb, known as Wescher's cata-

comb, was discovered at Karmous not far from Pompey's Column in 1858, but it has since disappeared.

Wescher's catacomb was decorated with frescoes which were considered very beautiful. Another catacomb of Christian origin was discovered east of the city on the hills near Hadra, but this catacomb has been buried for ever under the Deaconesses' Hospital.

Lit. : Blomfield, R. M., « Churches and Monuments of ancient Alexandria, » *Rivista Egiziana* (1894).

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Forster, E. M., *Alexandria*. New York, 1961.

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CHAPTER X

THE CHURCHES OF ALEXANDRIA TODAY

1. — The Coptic Orthodox Churches

The Patriarchal Church of St. Mark

The Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate with the Cathedral of St. Mark and the patriarchal offices is situated at 19, Rue de l'Eglise Copte. One approaches the cathedral through a large courtyard which is enclosed by a school and by the offices of the patriarchate.

The Cathedral, which was reconstructed between 1950 and 1952, has three haikals which are dedicated to St. Michael (north), St. Mark (centre) and St. George (south). The iconostasis is adorned by the following icons which show traces of Graeco-Syrian origin : St. Michael, St. Paul the Theban, St. Dimiana, the Holy Virgin, Christ, St. Mark, St. Antony and St. George. The dome above the apsis is decorated with stained-glass windows of Christ and the Evangelists. The stained-glass window of the Crucifixion shows the western inscription on the Cross INRI, instead of the eastern inscription INBI.

Lit. : Chaine, Marius, « L'Eglise de Saint-Marc à Alexandrie, » *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, sér. 3, IV (XXIV), 3 et 4, 372-386.

The Church of St. Menas

The Church of St. Menas is situated at Rue al-Hurriyah in the district of Fleming. The large basilican style church was built in the first part of the 20th century by Dr. Sami

Bey Saboungi. The church is impressive on account of its simplicity. The altar is mounted on four different Graeco-Roman columns. A series of beautiful stained-glass windows adorns the apse. The baptistery is situated on the northern side of the church.

Below the central haikal, which is dedicated to St. Menas, is the tomb of Dr. Sami Bey Saboungi (d. 1943).

Other Coptic Orthodox Churches

The other Coptic Orthodox Churches of Alexandria are : The Church of the Holy Virgin (1935) Rue Râdî, Muharram Bey ; the Church of St. Michael (1939) Rue Shagaret al-Durr ; the Church of SS. George and Antony (1951) 71, Rue Muharram Bey ; the Church of St. Mercurius (1952) 52, Rue al-Hilmîyah ; the Church of St. George (1937) 64, Rue al-Anhâr ; the Church of the Holy Virgin (1956) 83, Rue al-Fawâkih; the Church of St. George (1944) Rue Canal al-Suez, Chatby ; the Church of St. Theodore (1950) Rue Canal al-Suez ; the Church of SS. Mary and Joseph (1956) 35, Rue Simûhah ; the Church of St. George (1960) 126, Rue Amîr Ibrâhîm, Sporting ; the Church of St. Shenute (1953) Rue al-Maks ; the Church of St. Dimiana (1953) Rue 'Arif Bey ; the Church of St. George (1951) Rue al-Saqf, Maks the Church of St. George (1959) Rue al-Mattaqî, Bakûs ; the Church of St. George (1958) Rue al-Sabbaî 'Abd al-Salâm, Mandarah the Church of St. Menas (1952) 706, Rue al-Gaysh, Mandarah; the Church of St. George (summer church) (1959) Abûqîr.

2. — The Greek Orthodox Churches

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate is temporarily situated at 166, Rue Port Said, Ibrahimiyah, in a building which at one time served as a Greek High School. The Patriarchal Palace with the throne-room is situated on the first floor of the Institute for Oriental Studies of the Patriarchal Library. The

address of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria is P.O. Box 2006, Alexandria.

The throne-room is decorated with the paintings of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchs of Alexandria of the 19th and 20th centuries.

On the second floor, there is the Patriarchal Library with a collection of rare MSS. There are 536 Greek and Arabic MSS., 2110 rare editions and about 25,000 printed volumes.

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Sabas

The Cathedral of St. Sabas is situated in Rue du Patriarcat Grec. One approaches the cathedral through an outer and an inner court which are two metres below the street level. From the inner court a further flight of steps leads down to the Cathedral.

In the outer court there is the large church bell which was presented to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate by H. B. Alexis, Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia. The text of the inscription on the bell reads as follows : « In the name of the mediator of imperial grace, the governor-general of Novorossisk in the Caucasus, Count Michael Semenovitch Vorontzoff, the church dedicates this resounding monument. Archistrategus Michael ».

The inner court is interesting because of the numerous tombs among which are the tombs of the British officers Arthur Brice (d. 1801) and Thomas Hamilton (d. 1807). Moreover, there is a Russian tomb and that of Nicephorus, Archbishop of Libya (d. 1855).

One enters the Cathedral of St. Sabas through a door in the north wall. Noteworthy are the six ancient granite columns in the nave. In the north-east corner is the famous altar of St. Catherine with the conch of Aphrodite and a Coptic cross. The ambon has a spiral staircase winding around a red granite column. On the west wall is a row of icons (18th cent.) from the Greek Orthodox Monastery at Rashîd.

St. Sabas, born in 439 A.D. in Cappadocia, became a monk at the age of eighteen. During his life he fought unceasingly for the doctrines promulgated at the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.). In 518 A.D. he took refuge from the Bishop of Antioch and fled to Alexandria. Most of his life, however, was spent in Palestine. He died in 532 A.D.

According to tradition, the Cathedral of St. Sabas was burnt down in 641 A.D. It was soon rebuilt, for it was mentioned by Eutychius in 727 A.D. The pilgrims to the Holy Land included the Cathedral of St. Sabas in the itineraries. The pilgrims inform us that Greek monks of the Order of St. Basil inhabited the site. Felix Fabri (1483), François Suriano (1484) and other pilgrims saw in the Cathedral the throne from which St. Peter, St. John, St. Athanasius and others preached. In 1701, twenty monks lived in the Monastery of St. Sabas.

The Western pilgrims identified the site with the martyrdom of St. Catherine and even insisted on calling the church St. Catherine's. In the Middle Ages, Latins and Greek Orthodox worshipped in this church.

Lit. : Faivre, J., « L'Eglise Saint-Sabas et le Martyrium de Saint-Marc,» *Bull. de l'Association des Amis de l'Art Copte,* III (1937), 60-67.
Mosconas, Th. D., « L'Eglise de Saint-Saba à travers les siècles, » *Rev. des Conférences Françaises en Orient,* August, 1947.

The Church of the Evangelismos

The Church of the Evangelismos or the Church of the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin, which is also dedicated to St. Mark the Evangelist and SS. Athanasius, Cyril and John the Almoner, is situated at the Place de St. Catherine. The church is 41.80 ms long and 32 ms wide. The church is of the basilican order. The foundation-stone of the church was laid on November 16, 1847 and the consecration took place on March 25, 1856 by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, H. D. B. Hierotheus II.

In the apse behind the central altar there is a wall-painting depicting Christ as High-priest distributing the Holy Mysteries to His Apostles. Beneath this are the Angelic Powers and the Doctors of the Church in the act

of adoration. To the right of the central altar there is an altar commemorating the Crucifixion, and to the left, another commemorating the events which took place when Our Lord gave up the Spirit. In the respective niche of the Prothesis (Table of Preparation) there are wall-paintings of the Nativity of Christ, the Adoration of Magi, and the Flight into Egypt. The icons of the iconostasis are covered with silver. On the walls there are paintings in Byzantine style of scenes from the life of the Holy Virgin. Beneath the dome there is Christ represented as Pantocrator and above the apse is a painting of the Holy Virgin « wider than the heavens ». The stained-glass windows represent the Twelve Apostles and the Baptism of Christ and the Annunciation.

The Church of St. Michael and All Archangels

The Church of St. Michael and all Archangels at 74, Rue Heliopolis in Ibrahimiyah is noteworthy because of its Byzantine wall-paintings of themes of the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Feasts of the Church. In this church the ambon is situated above the iconostasis.

The Church of St. Demetrius

The Church of St. Demetrius at 82, Rue Chatby is attached to the Kaniskerion Orphanage. The outstanding characteristic of this church is its black and white marble iconostasis.

The Church of St. Nicholas

The Greek Orthodox Sailors' Church is the Church of St. Nicholas at Rue Tanis in Ibrahimiyah. The small church was built in 1899.

The Church of the Prophet Elias

The Church of St. Elias at Gianaclis is very spacious and beautiful. It was built in 1861.

The Church of St. Alexis Nevsky

The Russian Orthodox Church of St. Alexis Nevsky is situated on the first floor of 32, Rue Saad Zaghloul.

The Church of the Dormition (Arabophone)

The Church of the Dormition is situated at Rue al-Gaied Gohar and is interesting on account of its many icons. Noteworthy is the large icon of the Last Judgment on the northern wall which is surmounted by icons of the Crucifixion, St. Antony and St. Elias. Moreover, there is another set of ten icons representing scenes of the Life of Christ. On the south wall are icons of the Entombment : the Resurrection, the Ascension and others.

The Church of St. Antony the Great (Arabophone)

The Church of St. Antony the Great, which was built in 1957, is situated in Chatby. It is one of the most beautiful of the modern Orthodox Churches in Alexandria. The walnut iconostasis is in pure Byzantine style. The apse has six stained glass windows, and the chandeliers are of wrought-iron work. The church, which is a donation of Virginia Kamar Bassili, is attached to the Syrian school at Chatby.

Other Greek Orthodox Churches

The Church of St. Stephen, the Church of St. Paraskeve, the Church of St. Joseph of Arimathea, the Church of St. George, the Church of St. Catherine and the Church of St. Theodori.

3. — THE ARMENIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES

The Church of SS. Peter and Paul

The Armenian Orthodox Church of SS. Peter and Paul is situated at Rue Abû Dardar. The Church was built in

1884. The land for the church was acquired from Muhammad Alî by Boghos Yussef Bey and the monk Gabriel. After the death of Gabriel and the abdication of the Bishop Mesrob, who succeeded Gabriel, the church was built under the supervision of Takvor Pasha. The church was named after Boghos (Paul) Pasha and his son Peter. The high altar has five gradines and sixteen candles. As usual, there is a curtain to be drawn during certain parts of the Divine Liturgy. Behind the altar is a reproduction of Raphael's Madonna. The two side altars are dedicated to St. Peter (north) and to St. Gregory the Illuminator (south). The patriarchal throne is situated in the northern part of the nave. South of the main church is the Chapel of the Nativity, north of the main church is the Chapel of the Holy Virgin.

Noteworthy are the twenty very fine sanctuary lamps in the nave of the main church. In the narthex is a rather interesting painting of St. Gregory the Illuminator, preaching in the catacombs.

North of the church is an Armenian cemetery, where among others, there is the tomb of Nubar Pasha (1825-1899).

The Chapel of SS. Bartholomew and Thaddaeus

This chapel was built by Abraham Pasha in 1835 on the farm which he owned in the village of Disunis, Beheira Province, 20 kms. southeast of Alexandria. The chapel was used as a place of worship for those working on the farm.

4. — THE CATHOLIC CHURCHES

The six Catholic Rites, which are represented in Alexandria, are alphabetically listed.

A. THE ARMENIAN RITE

The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

The Armenian Catholic Patriarchate, which was built in

1890, is situated at 8, Rue Port Est. The Cathedral is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

The side altars of the cathedral are dedicated to St. Antony of Padua, the Sacred Heart, St. Gregory the Illuminator, St. Joseph, St. Theresa of Lisieux and St. Rita. The patriarchal throne is on the northern side of the central aisle. As in all Armenian churches, the cathedral has a curtain which is drawn at certain periods, during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

B. THE COPTIC RITE

The Cathedral of the Resurrection

The Coptic Catholic Patriarchate is situated at Rue Kolliat al-Tib opposite Rue Docteur Alî Ibrahîm Ramez. The Cathedral of the Resurrection, which was built on the reputed site of the ancient Caesareum, was dedicated on May 12, 1902 by Cyril II, Coptic Catholic Patriarch of Alexandria.

The Cathedral of the Resurrection gives a completely Latin impression. The side altars are dedicated to the Sacred Heart, St. Rita, Our Lady of Fatima, and St. Theresa of Lisieux. On the southern wall there is also a Shrine of St. George.

The patriarchal throne is situated on the northern side of the nave and carries a Greek inscription : « Peace be unto thee, Mark, my witness ». The high altar has all the usual characteristics of a Latin altar. Above the high altar is a painting of the Resurrection.

C. THE GREEK RITE

The Cathedral of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin

The winter residence of the Greek Catholic Patriarchate is situated at Rue Girgis Tawil. The Cathedral is dedicated to the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, and was built around 1870.

The spacious cathedral has three altars which are dedicated to St. George (north), the Dormition of the Holy Virgin (centre) and the Annunciation (south). The

patriarchal throne is situated on the south side of the centre aisle, facing a smaller throne. The cathedral has a beautifully carved ambon. Noteworthy are the ten large pink marble pillars.

In the immediate vicinity of the cathedral is the tomb of Girgis Tawil, who presented the church with the site of the present patriarchate.

The Church of St. Joseph

The summer residence of the Greek Catholic Patriarchate is situated at Rue al-Fath, Fleming (Ramleh). The Church of St. Joseph is beautifully situated in a large garden, where there are also the shrines of the Holy Virgin of Lourdes and of St. Theresa of Lisieux.

The Church of St. Joseph is rather simple. Two stands with icons of the Holy Virgin and Christ replace the traditional iconostasis. North of the main church is the Chapel of the Sacred Heart.

The Church of the Immaculate Conception

The Church of the Immaculate Conception is situated at Rue de Busiris, Ibrahimiyah. This church is one of the modern Greek Catholic churches which are decorated with beautiful wall paintings which represent the following persons :

The Holy Virgin, St. Elias, St. Barbara, St. Maximus, St. Basil, SS. Peter and Paul, the Baptism of Christ, the Resurrection, the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, the Birth of the Holy Virgin, the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, the Transfiguration, St. John the Baptist, St. John Chrysostom, St. John of Damascus, St. Catherine, St. Nicholas and St. Joseph. Behind the altar is a representation of Christ as Highpriest, above the altar, the Annunciation.

The Church of St. Peter (Egreja Sao Pedro)

The Egreja Sao Pedro is a gift of a former Brazilian Consul at Alexandria and was constructed in 1889, renovated in 1956. The Church is situated at Rue Debanne.

The iconostasis is adorned with the icons of St. Athanasius and St. Cyril, the Holy Virgin, Christ, and the three Cappadocian Fathers. Other icons represent the Sacred Heart, St. Joseph, St. Peter, St. Michael, the Protection of the Christians and the Dormition. In the narthex, there is an icon of the Holy Virgin of the Grottaferrata and a picture of St. Theresa of Lisieux with many ex-votos.

D. THE LATIN RITE

The Church of St. Catherine

The Church of St. Catherine at Place de St. Catherine is one of the most majestic sanctuaries in Egypt. The church, which was dedicated in 1850, was built upon a piece of land which was given by Muhammad Alî in 1835. The church is maintained by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land in Egypt.

The high-altar of St. Catherine is flanked by the shrine of St. Catherine (south) and a beautifully carved pulpit on the north. The side altars on the north wall are dedicated to the Holy Virgin of Mt. Carmel and SS. Clara and Elias, St. Joseph, the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Conception.

The altar of the Sacred Heart is set between two large mosaics of St. Francis and the Sacred Heart.

The altar of the Immaculate Conception is adorned by two statues representing St. Lucia and St. Theresa of Lisieux.

The side altars on the south wall are dedicated to the Holy Virgin of Pompey, the Crucifixion, St. Antony of Padua and St. Francis.

The side altar of St. Francis is adorned by two statues of St. Louis IX (d. 1270) and St. Elizabeth.

In the south corner of the narthex is a statue of St. Salvatore da Orta. The baptistery is situated in the north corner of the narthex.

Behind the high altar of St. Catherine is the tomb of Victor Emmanuel of Savoia (1869-1947). The apse is adorned with a large painting of St. Catherine disputing with the pagan philosophers.

The organ of the Church of St. Catherine is the largest organ in Egypt. The instrument was sent from Italy in 38 « boxes of notable dimensions » and installed in 1927.

North of the Church of St. Catherine is the Church of St. Sabina. The altar contains the complete relics of St. Sabina, who suffered martyrdom in Rome in 126 A.D. According to tradition, St. Sabina was converted to Christianity by her slave Seraphia.

The Church of St. Sabina is adorned by two statues of St. Theresa and the Holy Family and by a large painting of the Blessed Amedeo IX, Duke of Savoia (1435-1472).

Lit. : Un Secolo di Vita Parrochiale, Santa Caterina in Alessandria d'Egitto. Parrocchia di Santa Caterina, 1950.

The Chapel of St. Mark

The Chapel of St. Mark is situated on the campus of the College of St. Mark at Camp de César. The College of St Mark, which is maintained and operated by the Christian Brothers, was founded in 1928 to relieve the College of St. Catherine (1847). According to a Latin tradition, the College is built on the site of the ancient Martyrium of St. Mark.

The spacious Chapel of St. Mark has three altars which are dedicated to Our Lady of Good Welcome, St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Joseph. On both sides of the central step-altar are statues of St. Mark and St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle. The step-altar is surmounted by a statue of Christ.

The chapel is worth visiting because of its many beautiful stained-glass windows which represent the following themes:

North wall : The martyrdom of the Blessed Solomon, Brother of the Christian Schools, St. Jean Baptiste

de la Salle consecrating his institute to the Virgin, Jeanne d'Arc praying before battle, St. Athanasius confounding the Arians, St. Louis IX rendering justice.

South wall : The glorification of St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle, universal patron of youth, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, St. Cyril of Alexandria defending the Divine Maternity of the Virgin, St. Catherine disputing with the pagan philosophers.

The apse is decorated with two large mosaics of Christ at Emmaus (north) and the Crucifixion (south), and stained-glass windows of Christ and the Evangelists.

Lit. : *Prospectus General*, Imp. Ecole Don Bosco, Alexandrie.

The Church of St. Francis at Sidi al-Monnayer

The Church of St. Francis was built in 1882 to serve a predominantly Maltese constituency. Today the church is the Catholic sailors' mission in Alexandria.

This spacious church has the following side-altars : St. Joseph, St. Antony of Padua, the Sacred Heart, the Immaculate Conception, St. Rita, the Crucifixion. Above the high altar is a statue of the Crucifixus and St. Francis.

The Church of St. Francis was built on the site of the ancient Church of St. Theonas.

The Church of St. Theonas (16th Patriarch of Alexandria) was reconstructed and enlarged by Alexander (313-326 A.D.). It was in this church that the Patriarch Alexander witnessed the young Athanasius « acting » as bishop and baptizing his fellow mates. In 356 A.D., Syrianus the prefect attempted to arrest Athanasius in the Church of St. Theonas. In 431 A.D., the Church of St. Theonas became the Church of the Virgin Mary, and in 640 A.D., the Church of the Virgin Mary was transformed into the Mosque of the Thousand Pillars, famous for its marble and porphyry columns. When the French arrived in Egypt in 1798, the site was converted into an artillery camp. In 1872, a hospice for the poor and destitute was built here which later became barracks for the police. In 1881 the site was acquired by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.

The Convent of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart

Those interested in Christian archaeology should not fail to visit the courtyard of the Convent where there are numerous pillars, socles and capitals of the ancient Church of St. Theonas and the Mosque of the Thousand Pillars. The Convent is situated opposite the Church of St. Francis.

The small Chapel of the Sacred Heart was built in 1886 and is very simple and plain.

The site of the convent was acquired by the Abbess Maria Caterina Trajani of Rome and Sister Maria Pia Girolimini of Sinigaglia, the Superior of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Egypt.

The Church of the Immaculate Conception

The Church of the Immaculate Conception at 70, Rue Saba' Banât is maintained by the Lazarists or the Congregation of the Mission.

The church with its rich stained-glass windows in the apse has four side-altars which are dedicated to St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Lazarists, the Pietas, Gethsemane and the Flight into Egypt. The wall paintings portray the Crucifixion, Purgatory, an Apparition of the Holy Virgin and the Blessed Jean Gabriel Perhoyre (d. 1840). Above the high altar is the statue of the Holy Virgin.

The Church of the Sacred Heart

The Church of the Sacred Heart is situated at Rue Port-Said, almost opposite the temporary Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. The church, which was consecrated on June 22, 1924, is maintained by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land

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Lit. : Dulith, E., « Deux colonnes de l'église de Théonas. » *Bull. Soc. Arch. Alex.*, VII, 55-57.

The high-altar is dedicated to the Sacred Heart, whereas the side-altars are dedicated to the Holy Cross, St. Francis, St. Joseph, St. Rita, the Holy Rosary, St. Antony of Padua, Our Lady of Fatima, St. Theresa of Lisieux. North of the high-altar is a small chapel dedicated to the Holy Virgin. The baptismal font is situated in the north-western corner of the church. The stained-glass windows represent events in the Life of St. Francis.

The Residence of St. Francis Xavier

The Residence of St. Francis Xavier is situated at Rue Port Said and serves as a cultural centre for professional conferences. The centre offers musical evenings, sponsors a cinema club and maintains a large lending library. The building was established in 1941.

The Chapel of the Residence is severe in its simplicity. The altar is surmounted by a gigantic representation of the Holy Virgin with Child in bas-relief. The door of the Tabernacle is noteworthy because of its filigree work.

Other Latin Churches

The Church of St. Cyril (Franciscans), Sidi Bishr ; the Church of St. Antony of Padua (Franciscans), Bacos ; the Church of St. Athanasius (Franciscans), Smouha ; the Church of St. John Bosco (Salesian Fathers of St. John Bosco), Alexandria.

E. THE MARONITE RITE

The Church of the Holy Virgin Mary

The Maronite Church of the Holy Virgin Mary is situated at 4, Rue de L'Eglise Maronite.

Noteworthy in this church are only the large paintings representing St. Maron, St. Joseph, Gethsemane and St. George. On both sides of the high-altar are statues of the Sacred Heart and St. Antony of Padua.

In addition to this church, the Maronites have a small church dedicated to St. Theresa of the Child Jesus at Mustafa Pasha, Ramleh.

F. THE SYRIAN RITE

The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart

The Syrian Catholic Cathedral of the Sacred Heart is situated at 2, Rue Nuh Effendi (ex Rue Goussio).

5. — THE ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY OF ALEXANDRIA

The Anglican Chaplaincy in Alexandria comprises the Church of St. Mark at al-Tahrîr Square, All Saints' Church, Stanley Bey, Bulkley and the Church Hall at Rue Memphis, Ibrahimiyah.

The Church of St. Mark

This picturesque church, which is set in a pleasant garden, is the principal Anglican place of worship. The reredos has four beautiful panels portraying St. George, St. Patrick, St. David, and St. Andrew. In the centre is the Crucifixus. The stained-glass windows in the apse show Christ and the Evangelists. To the left, on entering the church is the Catherine Phillips Batchelder Chapel which was dedicated on February 21, 1904 by the Rt. Rev. G. F. P. Blyth, Archbishop in Jerusalem.

> The Church of St. Mark was commenced in 1839 when the foundation stone was laid. Owing to various difficulties, it was not completed for more than fifteen years. The consecration was performed by Bishop Samuel Gobat in April 1855. The site of the church was given by Muhammad Alî to be held in perpetuity by the local Anglican community.

All Saints' Church

The patronage of All Saints' Church, Stanley Bey, is vested in the hands of the Chaplain of St. Mark's, Alexandria.

> The Church of All Saints was commenced in 1890, and the following year was consecrated by Bishop Blyth. It is a handsome building, and the internal decoration is rich and in good taste. The first chaplain appointed to the church was the Rev. T. R. Lawrence (1891-1897).

6. — THE COPTIC EVANGELICAL CHURCH

There are four Coptic Evangelical churches in Alexandria. The principal Coptic Evangelical Church is known as the 'Attârîn Church. The Coptic Evangelical Church in Palais, Ramleh, used to be a summer church. Since 1956, however, this church has a full time ministry. There are also churches in Muharram Bey and Sîdî Bishr.

7. — OTHER PROTESTANT CHURCHES

Eglise Protestante d'Alexandrie

The Protestant Church of Alexandria is situated at Rue de la Poste. The church, which is very plain and beautiful, radiates an enchanting atmosphere. On the left side there are several stained-glass windows, the baptistery is constructed out of marble and the sanctuary is adorned with a beautiful wooden altar. Noteworthy is the French Altar-Bible which was printed in 1707 by Henry Desbordes.

> The congregation was founded on November 23, 1856. About ten years later, on March 22, 1866, the birthday of King Wilhelm I of Prussia, the Protestant Church was dedicated. The church, which began its services as a German church, remained as such until the First World War, when the Protestant Church, being German property, was sequestered. Following the First World War, the church was served by Swiss ministers.

Ever since, Divine Services are conducted alternately in French and in German. The church is administered congregationnaly.

Lit. : Kaufmann, A., *Die Geschichte der Evangelischen Gemeinde zu Alexandrien, von 1856-1898.* Lahr, Baden, 1898.

The Neff Christian Fellowship Centre

The Neff Christian Fellowship Centre of the Church of God in Egypt is situated at 51, Sharia Ahmad Kamha, Camp Caesar, Alexandria. The centre was named in honour of the first resident missionaries of the Church of God in Egypt, the Reverend and Mrs. Thaddeus Neff.

The centre, which offers services in English, Arabic and Armenian, was established in 1953. From its beginnings, the centre was served by the Rev. and Mrs. Ernest W. Lafont. Divine Services are conducted weekly. In addition, there are special gatherings for social and fellowship functions among the high-school and college-youth of the community. During 1959, an additional floor was added to the building which contains a large recreation hall with a library corner and other recreation facilities.

The Alexandria Community Church

The Alexandria Community Church is an interdenominational fellowship of Protestant Christians who are resident in Alexandria. Divine Services are conducted every Sunday morning at 11 : 00 a.m. in All Saints' Anglican Church at Stanley Bey.

The fellowship was inaugurated in 1954, when it was known as the American Community Church in Alexandria. At that time, the Sahara Petroleum Co. had its offices in Alexandria with eighty American families resident in the city. The church committee, elected annually at a congregational meeting, is responsible for the administrative affairs of the church. The congregation is affiliated with the Department of Overseas Union Churches of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

CHAPTER X.

THE GRAECO-ROMAN MUSEUM AT ALEXANDRIA

The Graeco-Roman Museum at Alexandria is situated at 5, Sharia al-Mathaf (Rue du Musée). The Christian antiquities are exhibited in Room I. The student of Christian archaeology should not fail to visit this significant collection of early Christian art. Numerous funerary stelae of white marble had their origin at the Ennaton and Armant. Along the wall to the right of the entrance, there are arranged about two hundred Christian funerary inscriptions which were discovered either in or around Alexandria or in Upper Egypt, e.g. Aswân, Akhmîm and Ashmunain. The visitor should note the various forms of the Cross. Towards the centre of the wall, there are several terracotta figurines which have come from the Shrine of St. Menas at Mareotis. Other exhibits are those of Coptic and Byzantine papyri, mummies, capitals, collections of carved bone and ivory, writings on leather, amphora stoppers, bearing inscriptions, images of saints or other Christian symbols. Moreover, there are terracotta lamps, St. Menas ampullae, Coptic tapestries from the Christian cemeteries of Akhmîm and Antinoë. The marble bas-relief represents St. Menas in the same attitude as on the ampullae between two crouching camels. The large pithos (vase for holding wine, water or food) is decorated with a figure representing Christ (?) in a medallion.

The idea of founding a museum at Alexandria originated in 1891 with the Athenaeum Society. The museum was officially opened in 1895, but was enlarged in 1899 and in 1904. One section is devoted to early Christian art

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Lit. : Adriani, A., *Annualre du Musée Gréco-Romain, 1935-1939.* Alexandria, 1940.

Breccia, E., *Le Musée Gréco-Romain, 1931-1932.* Bergamo, Inst. Ital. d'Arti Graf.

CHAPTER XII

THE ANCIENT CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES AROUND ALEXANDRIA

The monasteries, as well as their ruins around Alexandria, have almost completely vanished except for some of their names which have lingered on in the minds of the people. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to identify with certainty any of the numerous ruins around Alexandria with the monasteries, which played such an important rôle in the history of the Egyptian Church from the 5th to the 9th century.

South-west of Alexandria, on the way to the Desert of Scetis (Wâdî al-Natrûn), there used to be several monasteries which were known by the distance which separated them from Alexandria. They were named after the milestone which was situated closest to the monastery.

THE PEMPTON MONASTERY

Closest to Alexandria, at the fifth milestone, on the way to Mareotis, there was the famous Pempton.

> This monastery was founded by St. Anastasia, a virgin of Constantinople, whom the Emperor Justin asked in marriage, though his wife was still alive. Anastasia reported this to the Empress, who sent her to Alexandria and built her a convent outside the city. Later, Anastasia retired to Scetis.

THE ENNATON MONASTERY

The most famous of this monastery group was the Ennaton, at the ninth milestone. The Ennaton, also known as the Dair al-Hanatûn or the Dair al-Zuqâq, was situated west of Dakheila. To this day, the bedouins refer to the site west of Dakheila as the Kom al-Zuqâq which is near the Kom al-Hanatûn (Ennaton). Four or five kilometres west of Kom al-Zuqâq is a small village called al-Dair where there are several ruins.

> By the 6th century, the Ennaton had achieved considerable importance in the life of the Church. John II (505-516 A.D.) and Peter IV (576 A.D.) had been monks in the Ennaton prior to their elections as patriarchs. In 616 A.D., the Patriarch Anastasius (605-616 A.D.) resided at the Ennaton when he welcomed the Patriarch of Antioch. Moreover, it was at the Ennaton where the conference was held which resulted in the reestablishment of full communion with the Church of Antioch. Thomas of Harkel and Paul of Tella wrote many Syriac MSS at the Ennaton Monastery at the order of Anastasius. The Ennaton was destroyed by the Persians during the patriarchate of Andronicus (616-622 A.D.). In the days of Mark III (799-819), John the Hermit of the Monastery of al-Zuqâq prophesied the destruction of Alexandria. According to al-Maqrîzî, who calls the Ennaton, al-Zuqâq, it was the duty of the Coptic Patriarch after his election in the Church of al-Mu'allaqah, in Cairo to proceed to the Ennaton, but the custom fell into disuse. This practice certainly points to the very great importance of the Ennaton in the eyes of the Copts.

Other monasteries around Alexandria were the Dekaton at the 10th milestone and the Eikoston at the 20th milestone.

THE OKTOKAIDEKATON

The Oktokaidekaton, which was situated at the 18th milestone, was known as the third monastery from Alexandria, though not on the road to the Desert of Scetis but to the episcopal see of al-Karyun.

It has been suggested that the site called al-Dair north of the village of al-Amîrîya may mark the place where this ancient monastery was situated. The monastery is said to date from the 5th century.

Here Andronicus and Anastasia of Antioch lived for twelve years. When Anastasia died at the Oktokaidekaton her true sex was at last revealed.

THE DAIR KIBRIUS

The Dair Kibrius (Cyrius or Cyprius) was situated to the north-east of Alexandria on the coast.

By the 7th century, the monastery had acquired considerable importance. Abbot Theonas had lived at the monastery from 572 A.D. at least until 622 A.D. The monastery escaped the Persian destructions. In 621 A.D., Benjamin I entered the monastery as a monk before he was elected to the patriarchate.

THE METANOIA

In the latter part of the 4th century, the Metanoia or the Monastery of Penitence, a monastery of the Pachomian order, was built at Canopus east of Alexandria, on the site of the ancient and famous pagan pleasure resort.

Theophilus, who destroyed the Alexandrian Serapeum, did not spare the temples at Canopus and installed a monastery, while another monastery was set up at Menuthis in the Temple of Isis. The Metanoia attracted both Greeks and Romans for whom St. Jerome translated the monastic rules into Latin.

The ruins of Canopus and Menuthius form an almost uninterrupted series of small elevations which extend all around Fort Tewfiq. Before the foundation of Alexandria, Canopus was the capital of the Menelait Nome and the most important port of the Delta. Canopus was celebrated for its sanctuary of Serapis which was visited by numerous pilgrims who went there to implore the god to cure their illnesses.

At the beginning of the 5th century, Cyril I decided to convey the body of St. Cyrus to Menuthis together with that of St. John who had been buried in St. Mark's Cathedral, in order to replace the pagan healing-cult by a Christian one. Numbers of miracles were soon performed and the fame and prosperity of the new sanctuary became as great as that of the earlier.

In the 6th century, the Metanoia was considered to be one of the leading monasteries, and Andrew, the abbot of the monastery, appears to have been a kind of provincial superior for the Nile Delta or perhaps for the monasteries founded by the Metanoia. By the end of the 6th century, the Metanoia was definitely in Byzantine hands, whereas the Ennaton remained a stronghold of the Copts. The Metanoia escaped the destructions which befell the Ennaton and also evaded the destructions by the Persians.

The region around Alexandria was covered with cells, hermitages and monasteries, and some monks from Upper Egypt travelled to Alexandria to establish themselves near the sea shore. Dorotheus the Theban, who lived at the sea shore near Alexandria occupied himself in building stone cells for other monks.

It is most unfortunate that actually nothing has survived of this once so distinguished tradition of Alexandrian monasticism.

THE CHURCH IN THE TEMPLE OF TAPOSIRIS MAGNA

The temple of Taposiris Magna is situated in Burg Abû Sîr in the immediate vicinity of the ancient Roman lighthouse. The visitor must travel from Alexandria along the coast road in westerly direction as far as Burg al-'Arab (35 km.). At Burg al-'Arab, turn and follow the road to the village of Burg Abû Sîr.

The large temple construction, known to the bedouins as Qasr al-Bardauîl, stands on the summit of a hill. The tem-

ple was at one time dedicated to Osiris as the name Abû Sîr indicates.

In the 7th century, the Monastery of Taposiris was an important institution. Victor, a monk of this monastery, was nominated for the candidacy of the Patriarchate. (HPCC *Patr. Orient.* V. 26).

> Taposiris was the centre from which the Prefect of Egypt used to take the census for the Libyan Nome. From the 19th century onwards the site was studied by Pacho (1819), Scholz (1820-21), Minutoli (1834), Robecchi-Brichetti (1890) and Breccia (1920).

The ruins of the ancient town cover the southern slope of the hill on which the temple was built. The space within the vast temple enclosure gives the impression of a great void. Excavations have brought to light traces of a small Christian Church, the apse of which was built against the pylons at the eastern wall of the temple.

In the interior of these pylons, a narrow staircase leads to the top from where one enjoys a marvellous view over the desert and the sea.

Lit. : De Cosson, A., *Mareotis*. London, 1935.
Breccia, Ev., *Alexandrea ad Aegyptum*. Bergamo, 1922.
Kaufmann, C. M., *Zur Ikonographie der Menasampullen*... Cairo, 1910.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES AROUND ALEXANDRIA

1. — THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF ABUQIR

The town of Abûqîr, situated 20 km. east of Alexandria, was famous for its temples of Serapis and Isis, which, however, were destroyed by Cyril the Great. Subsequently, the relics of SS. Cyrus and John were taken to Abûqîr. Following the translation of the relics of SS. Cyrus and John to Old Cairo, the tradition of the Unmercenary Saints was preserved by the people of Abûqîr.

The Church of SS. Cyrus and John (Coptic Orthodox)

The Coptic Orthodox Chruch of SS. Cyrus and John is situated at 3, Rue Anbâ Kirillus in Abûqîr. The small church, which was built in 1935, is worth visiting because of its numerous modern Coptic paintings, which are the product of the Coptic Art School at Abbasiyah, Cairo.

The paintings by Isis Habib Gorgi and Isaac Fanus represent Gethsemane, the Mystical Supper, the Washing of the Feet, the Woman with the issue of blood, the Healing of the Blind, the Raising of Jairus' daughter, the Raising of Lazarus, the Palm-Sunday Procession, the Miraculous Draught of Fish, the Flight into Egypt, the Deposition from the Cross, the Resurrection, the Annunciation, the Nativity and the Flight into Egypt.

The Church of the Unmercenary Saints (Greek Orthodox)

The Greek Orthodox Church of the Unmercenary Saints is situated at Rue al-Fath in Abûqîr. The small wooden building was constructed in 1920. The church is adorned with many icons of SS. Cyrus and John and SS. Cosmas and Damian.

The Church of St. Lucia

The Latin Church in Abûqîr is situated behind the Greek Orthodox Church of the Unmercenary Saints. The church is maintained by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, and is dedicated to St. Lucia.

2. — THE GREEK ORTHODOX MONASTERY OF St. NICHOLAS AT RASHID

The Greek Orthodox Church maintains a small monastery in Rashîd (Rosetta), about 60 km. east of Alexandria. Those interested to visit the monastery ought to obtain a letter of introduction from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, Alexandria, 166, Rue Port Said (Tel. 74645).

The monastery is situated in the centre of Rashîd at Rue Kenisset al-Arwam. The monastery consists of two small churches. The church furthest to the south is dedicated to St. Christophorus, whereas the main church is dedicated to St. Nicholas. Once a year, on the Feast of St. Nicholas, December 6, a Greek Orthodox fair is celebrated at the church which is attended by pilgrims from Alexandria. The monastery is not inhabited, except for a care-taker.

> Greeks, especially from Crete, had settled in Rashîd around 1645, and their number increased as time went on, so that by 1813, there was a Greek Orthodox Bishop of Rashîd. Of the history of the monastery almost nothing is known.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SHRINE OF ST. MENAS AT MAROETIS

The Shrine of St. Menas (Dair Abû Mînâ) at Mareotis (Maryût) is situated in the Libyan Desert 15 km. south-east of Burg al-'Arab, and 11 km. south of Bahîg. Coming from Cairo, and travelling on the Cairo-Alexandria Desert Road, one turns at kilometre 169 from Cairo or 46 to Alexandria to the northwest, following the track south of the new irrigation canal for one kilometre and then along the old track for 25 km. After 20.5 km. one passes the tomb of Shaikh Mahmûd al-Faqîr.

THE HISTORY OF THE SHRINE

There were many martyrs' shrines in Egypt, but their popularity was generally confined to their own districts. The only two martyrs' shrines which had an international reputation were those of SS. Cyrus and John at Abûqîr and of St. Menas at Maryût, and of these, that of St. Menas was undoubtedly the more celebrated one.

> During the reign of St. Constantine, a small oratory, like a tetrapylon was built over the tomb of the Saint. A few years later, during the patriarchate of St. Athanasius, a church was built over the tomb of the Saint, and bishops, priests and laity rejoiced in the consecration of the first Church of St. Menas. The fame of the signs and wonders which appeared in that church through the intercession of St. Menas, the martyr, was noised abroad everywhere. Soon, the church became too small to accommodate all the pilgrims, who came from many parts of the Ancient World.

During the reign of the Emperor Arcadius, the sanctuary was enlarged through the building of a great basilica, which, to this day, is known as the Church of Arcadius. The Emperor Zeno then constructed a large city and a palace for himself in the vicinity of the shrine. An Ethiopian *Ms.* informs us about the visit of the Emperor Zeno to the Shrine of St. Menas, and the subsequent occupation of the sacred site by 12,000 soldiers for its defense against the marauding Bedouins.

The number of priests and monks attached to the Church of St. Menas is difficult to estimate, though Kaufmann feels justified in speaking of several hundred priests, apart from thousands of shop-keepers, workmen etc., who inhabited the Desert of Mareotis in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Ever since the discovery of the St. Menas Baths in 1907, the sacred Shrine in the Desert of Mareotis has been compared with Lourdes, for large numbers of pilgrims went to the Shrine of St. Menas to be healed by the waters, which had such a beneficial therapeutic effect. Menas ampullae embossed with the effigy of the Saint together with inscriptions for containing the sacred water, were on sale and found their way into almost every part of the Ancient World.

At the beginning of the 7th century, the Shrine of St. Menas was in the hands of the Greeks or Melkites, for we hear of the visit of the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria, St. John the Almoner, to the Desert of Mareotis.

During the patriarchate of Khâîl (743-767 A.D.), there arose the question of the jurisdiction over the Church of St. Menas, for both, the Copts and Melkites, requested a decision from the Government. The judge decided in favour of the Copts.

During the patriarchate of Joseph I (830-849 A.D.), the churches and buildings of St Menas suffered considerable damage. In 836 A.D., al-Mu'tasim decided to build the Gausaq al-Khaqanî in Samarra with the most precious marble and stones which were available in his empire. Thus the Church of St. Menas was robbed of its coloured marbles and its unequalled pavement. Joseph, however, rebuilt the church.

There is good reason to believe that it was customary for the patriarchs of the 8th and 9th centuries to go

to the Desert of Mareotis on the Feast of Saint Menas, in order to celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the Shrine of the Saint. In the 9th century, the Shrine of St. Menas was pillaged and destroyed by the Bedouins, and by the 11th century Bedouins are reported to have hidden themselves there, in order to waylay travellers. The Church of St. Menas was still standing as late as the 12th century, but the pilgrim-city around it was in ruins.

Almost one thousand years of silence cover the remains of this once glorious Christian metropolis. In 1905, the German Kaufmann expedition rediscovered the Shrine of St. Menas and excavated the ruins for two successive years. The remains of this Shrine which have been brought to light are as follows :

THE CHURCH OF St. MENAS

The Church of St. Menas, built over the tomb of the Saint, was consecrated by the Patriarch Theophilus (384-412 A.D.) and was built of limestone. The Church of St. Menas had three aisles with apses. The altar, the foundations of which can still be seen, stood immediately above the tomb of the Saint.

THE BASILICA OF ARCADIUS

When the Church of St. Menas became too small for the many pilgrims who were attracted to this holy shrine, the Emperor Arcadius built an enormous basilica, which was situated to the east of the Church of St. Menas. The roof of this basilica was supported by fifty-six marble columns, the socles of which are still to be seen. Like the Church of St. Menas, the Church of Arcadius had three aisles. The basilica had a length of 60 metres and a width of 26.50 metres. The transept had a length of 50 metres. The total length of the group of sacred buildings comprising the basilica, the first church over the tomb of the Saint and the baptistery, is as much as 120 metres.

THE BAPTISTERY

A monumental baptistery was added to the western part of the church. Its ruins are from 12 to 14 metres high. The baptistery was a central building, square on the outside and octagonal within.

THE CITY

In 1951, the excavations at the Shrine of St. Menas were resumed, and the work carried out by the Coptic Museum has resulted in the discovery of several souvenir-shops, glass and pottery shops, etc.

THE NEW MONASTERY OF St. MENAS

About 250 m. north-west of the Government Rest House of St. Menas, just outside the ruins of the church, is the foundation-stone for a new Coptic Monastery of St. Menas. The text on the stone reads as follows :

> The Monastery of Abû Mînâ Thaumaturgus. Its Foundation Stone was laid by the blessed hand of His Holiness, the Glorious Pope Cyril VI, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of Mark, and this was on the blessed Friday, the 27th November, 1959, 17th Hatur, 1676 A.M.
>
> With the enthronement of Cyril VI to the patriarchal throne of St. Mark in 1959 began a new chapter in the history of the Shrine of St. Menas. Both the Coptic Museum in cooperation with the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo and the Coptic Orthodox Church have centered their attention upon the ancient shrine. Whereas the German Archaeological Institute in cooperation with the Coptic Museum is seriously occupied with a large scale project of mapping and excavating the whole region of the ruined site of Abû Mînâ, the Patriarch has spared no effort to have a new monastery and church built upon the site which the Government has allotted to the Church. On November 25, 1961, Cyril VI dedicated the first cells and the Chapel of St. Samuel which constitute the first part of the new Monastery of Abû Mînâ. The Chapel of St. Samuel, which is part of the building in which the

cells are situated, is adorned with many icons. Several of those icons have been transferred from the Church of St. Menas, north of Old Cairo, to Maryût. The icons represent the Annunciation, Christ, St. Antony, St. Menas (29.6.1960 by Victor Aziz), St. Shenute, the Good Shepherd, SS. Antony and Paul, the Holy Virgin, the Crucifixion, Christ, St. Menas, the Archangel Michael, SS. Maximus and Domitius, St. Menas (by Atiya Farag Iskander and a gift from the Church of St. Menas, Fleming, Alexandria).

On February 15, 1962, the relics of St. Menas were translated from the Dair Mârî Mînâ in Cairo, where they had been since the middle of the 14th century, to the Desert of Maryût. The new Church of St. Menas at Maryût includes seven altars. In addition to the administrative buildings and the cells, a retreat house for conferences has been completed. In 1971 eight monks lived at the monastery.

Lit. : Drescher, J., *Apa Mena*. Cairo, 1946.

De Cosson, A., *Mareotis*. London, 1935.

Falls, E., *Three Years in the Libyan Desert*. London, 1913.

Kaufmann, C. M., *Die Ausgrabung der Menas-Heiligtuemer in der Mareotiswueste*. Cairo, 1908.

Kaufmann, C. M., *Die Heilige Stadt in der Wueste*. Kempten, 1924.

Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts*. Cairo, 1961.

Mueller-Wiener, W., « Abu Mena, » 4. Vorlaeufiger Bericht, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts in Kairo*, XXI, 1966.

Schlaeger, H., « Die neuen Grabungen in Abu Mena, » *Christentum am Nil* (Hrsg. K. Wessel), 1964.

CHAPTER XV

CELLIA

The ancient monastic site of Cellia, a name which comes from the Greek word for « cells », was rediscovered by Professor Antoine Guillaumont of Paris in the Spring of 1964. In the following year excavations of the site were undertaken by a Franco-Swiss team of experts under the direction of Professor Rodolphe Kasser of Geneva. The site of Cellia is extensive and it is located about two kilometres south of the Nûbârîya Canal, twenty kilometres east of the vine-plantations known as « Gianaclis » through which passes a cross-road which connects north of the Wâdî al-Natrûn and the Cairo-Alexandria Desert Route with Abu'l Matâmîr in particular and the Delta in general. The site of Cellia comprises the zones of Qusûr al-Rubâ'îyat and Qusûr Wadaidah in the Markaz of Hûsh 'Isâ, and Qusûr al-'Izailah, Qusûr 'Abîd and Qusûr 'Isâ in the Markaz of Dilingât, the whole of which extends over 11 kilometres in length and 2 kilometres in width, the total surface being from 9-10 kilometres.

Cellia is mentioned several times in early writings dealing with monasticism, such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum, the Historia monachorum in Aegypto* of Rufinus, *the Historia Lausiaco* of Palladius and the *Collationes Patrum* of Cassianus. The origin of this new monastic settlement is related in the *Apophthegmata Patrum,* where we read that, as the monks at Nitria had become very numerous, a certain Abba Antony came to Abba Amon in Nitria to ask his advice about a suitable locality for a new colony of monks. Having partaken of a meal at the ninth hour (3 p.m.) Abba Amon and Abba

Antony journeyed into the desert till sunset. Abba Amon then selected a suitable site for a monastic settlement and marked it with a Cross. Rufinus states in his *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* that the monks at Nitria who wished for greater solitude retired to Cellia where they constructed cells which were out of hearing and sight of one another. Sozomenus writing in the Vth century says that there were numerous hermitages built in this locality, hence its name.

Work on this site by the Franco-Swiss team of excavators is still in progress, and when it has at length been completed and the results studied and made available to scholars, we shall certainly be in possession of valuable evidence for the growth and development of monasticism in Egypt. A peculiarity of the cells already excavated is that they comprise not a single room, as might be expected, but a number of rooms. Round this group of rooms there are traces of a wall about a metre high. It has been suggested that this wall would have acted as a deterrent to the monk who might have wished to leave his cell, as he would have been obliged to climb over it to get outside. It was also noticed that often one of the rooms was also separated from the rest by a low wall, and it may thus have been reserved for the use of visiting monks. In the walls of most of the rooms there are niches, often decorated, which were destined for books and utensils. The walls of the rooms are often painted in dark red and have Crosses designed on them as well as a few inscriptions. Outside this group of rooms there appears to have been a small garden which supplied monks with vegetables which formed their diet. As regards the pottery discovered, this consists mainly of articles for everyday use, plates, pots and jars.

Lit. : A. Guillaumont, Le site des « Cellia » (Basse-Egypte), *Revue Archéologique*, Paris, 1964, tome II, juillet-septembre, pp. 43-50, (et surtout 44-47).

Rodolphe Kasser, Recherches Suisses d'Archéologie Copte, Volume I, *Kellia 1965*. Topographie générale — Mensurations et fouilles aux Qoucoûr 'Isâ et aux Qoucoûr el-'Abîd — Mensurations aux Qoucoûr el-'Izeila. Genève, (1967) .

CHAPTER XVI

THE COPTIC MONASTERIES OF THE WADI AL-NATRUN

1. — THE VALLEY OF THE WADI AL-NATRUN

The Wâdî al-Natrûn has a long history dating back to Pharaonic times. Caravans travelled from the Bahria and Farafra Oases to the Nile Delta, passing the small depression of Wâdî al-Natrûn. To-day, the caravan route is frequently used by the Ghawabis and Awlad 'Alî tribes to transport the dates and olives of Bahria to the Delta.

According to Coptic tradition, the Desert of Scetis or the Wâdî al-Natrûn has a Christian history going back as far as the visit of the Holy Family to Egypt. We read in the *Synaxarium* that, after visiting Tell Bastah and Munyat Samannûd, they crossed the river to the west bank and then saw from afar the Gabal al-Natrûn. The Holy Virgin Mary blessed it, knowing the effects of the angelic services that would be rendered there. Furthermore, it is alleged that some Christians escaped to the Desert of Scetis during the Diocletian persecution which began in 303 A.D. and lasted in the East till 311 A.D.

Three localities west of the Nile Delta are frequently referred to by the early monastic Fathers. For example, we hear that Macarius the Alexandrian, in the latter part of the 4th century, had four cells in the Western desert. One in Scete, the inner desert, one in Libya, one in the « Cells » and one in Mount Nitria. The Mount of Nitria, a place where nitrate was found, was situated about 40-50 km. north of the

present Cairo-Alexandria route Rest House, or some 14 km. south-west of Damanhûr.

Though still in the desert, the mountain was situated on the edge of the Delta. It is a mistake, therefore, to identify the present Wâdî al-Natrûn with the Mount of Nitria. It is in the latter locality that we find the earliest home of Christian asceticism. Palladius, who visited the monks living in Nitria in 391 A.D., met about 2,000 of the great and strenuous men who lived there, and who were adorned with the excellence of their spiritual life. From his account it is evident that some primitive form of communal fellowship existed among the monks of the Mount of Nitria.

The second settlement frequently referred to by the ancient authorities, was called Cellia, situated north-east of Scetis, the present Wâdî al-Natrûn. According to Palladius, this was the habitation of Macarius the Alexandrian. Many monks must have inhabited this region and some form of a hegemonic system must have been observed.

The locality which will mainly concern us has been known by a number of names : Scetis, Scythis, al-Askit, Scitium, Shiet, Shihet, Wâdî Habîb, and Wâdî al-Natrûn. Its distance from Cellia was a journey of about 60 km., and from the Mount of Nitria about 75 km. While both the Mount of Nitria and Cellia were visited by monks and others, there is no indication that Scetis was ever inhabited until the day when St. Macarius ventured there to find the quietness that he had missed elsewhere. This, then, was the area that eventually became the centre of Coptic monasticism, the region into which the great Saints of the Egyptian church withdrew : St. Macarius the Great, St. Bishoi, St. John the Short, St. John Kame and many others. Here we find the « Little Strangers », Maximum and Domitius of the Monastery of the Romans (Dair al-Barâmûs), and Moses the Black, who being attracted by the Saints of Scetis, decided to remain in the desert and to follow the ascetic life. This settlement, more remote than either the Mount of Nitria or Cellia, became in later years one of the foremost centres of Egyptian monasti-

cism. Its relative isolation preserved it as a place for contemplation and refuge.

The glory of the Mount of Nitria passed away after the 5th century and what we know of its previous existence comes to us through the reports of visitors. The two pairs, Rufinus and Melania, and SS. Jerome and Paula, are said to have visited the Mount of Nitria, and their testimonies give us an insight into the ascetic lives of the fathers in that region. A similar fate befell the community of the Cells. Only the most remote and isolated community survived the internal and external pressures exerted upon the monastic fellowships. The Desert of Scetis or Wâdî al-Natrûn, because of its isolation, became for many years the residence of the Coptic Patriarchs.

The Wâdî al-Natrûn is about 50 km. long, and spreads in a north-westerly direction, its south-eastern end being 75 km. north-west of Cairo. The valley is never more than 8 km. wide ; the low undulating hills running on each side of it are covered with silicious pebbles and a few very stunted bushy plants. These hills slope down to the sandy valley, the lowest point of which is 70 to 80 feet below the level of the sea at Alexandria. In this valley there are about eight lakes lying in a line from one end of the Wâdî to the other. All the lakes are salt, containing in solution varying quantities of chloride and carbonate of soda and sometimes some sodium sulphate. The sand for some distance round the lakes, and even as far south as Dair Abû Maqâr, is covered with a thick outgrowth of salt. The lakes dry up in the summer, some of them becoming completely dry, while others remain moist, though hardly wet marshes. The large deposits of salt give the country a very wintry aspect, the appearance, in fact, suggests a heavy fall of snow. This illusion, however, is rapidly dispelled by the quantities of mosquitoes which frequent the vicinity of the lakes.

For centuries, the monasteries in the Desert of Scetis could enjoy the isolation that the desert provided. The building of the Cairo-Alexandria desert road in 1936, the construction of the Rest House with its General Motors Beacon at

Wâdî al-Natrûn have helped to destroy the cherished isolation of the monasteries. With this encroachment of the « world » on the Desert of Scetis one may well ask, whether the eremitical manner of life in the Wâdî al-Natrûn may not suffer the same fate as the eremitical settlement in Nitria and Cellia. To the desert fellowship, the « world » is death, and the « world » penetrates rapidly and unceasingly into the desert. Some of the monks most affected by the worldly penetration have preferred to leave the ancient Desert of Scetis for the Desert of al-Qalamûn, others have left the monasteries to return to the original anchorite life, living in caves in the vicinity of Dair al-Surîân and Dair al-Barâmûs.

Lit. : Evelyn White, H. G., *The Monasteries of the Wâdî 'n-Natrûn.* New York, 1933, II, 17-42.
Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts.* Cairo, 1961.

2. — THE MONASTERY OF THE ROMANS

The Monastery of the Romans (Dair al-Barâmûs) is the northernmost monastery of the four remaining monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn. Those interested in visiting this monastery can hire a jeep at the Wâdî al-Natrûn Resthouse. One cannot reach the monastery with an ordinary car. The distance from the Rest House to the monastery is approximately 14 km.

The Dair al-Barâmûs is the earliest settlement in the Wâdî al-Natrûn. The Arabic name 'Barâmûs' is a transliteration of the Coptic 'Pa-Romeos' which means 'of the Romans'. The history of its foundation is intimately related to the lives of the two Roman Saints, Maximus and Domitius. According to tradition, these two young Roman princes, sons of the Roman Emperor Valentinian, arrived in Wâdî al-Natrûn after having visited the Christian shrines of Nicaea and Palestine. Here they met St. Macarius, who served as the priest of the desert. At first, St. Macarius tried to dissuade them. After a while, however, the « two Little Strangers », as they are also referred to, had established themselves in their cell and the older brother had attained perfection before he

died. Three days later, the younger brother also died, and whensoever the fathers came to St. Macarius he used to take them to the cell of those two brothers and say unto them : « Behold ye the martyrdom of these Little Strangers ». A year after their death St. Macarius consecrated the cell of the princes and said : « Call this place the Cell of the Romans ». With regard to the date of the foundation of the monastery, it is quite possible that a monastic community existed in the general location of the present Dair al-Barâmûs already in 340 A.D.

All the four Wâdî al-Natrûn monasteries suffered six sacks. The first occurred in 407 A.D., the second, few years later, in 410 A.D., the third in 444 A.D., the fourth in 507 A.D., the fifth in 817 A.D. and the sixth and last one in the 11th century. In all these sacks, the monastic buildings were wrecked, the churches plundered and the monks either slain or carried off as captives.

In response to the almost continuous attacks of the Berbers and Bedouins upon the monasteries, the Patriarch Shenute (9th cent.) built around the monasteries protecting walls. In 1088, 712 monks inhabited the seven monasteries in the Wâdî al-Natrûn, and twenty monks resided in the Dair al-Barâmûs. Significant reconstructions were carried out in the 13th century by Patriarch Gabriel III. The most severe threat to the monasteries, however, was the Black Death (14th century), which was followed by a subsequent famine.

The Dair al-Barâmûs, though insignificant in the early Middle Ages, supplied two monks, who in the 17th century ascended the patriarchal throne, Matthew III (1631-1646) and Matthew IV (1660-1675).

The most important visitors to the monastery from the 17th-19th century were : Coppin (1638), Thévenot (1657), De Maillet (1692), Du Bernat (1710), Sicard (1712), Sonnini (1778), Lord Prudhoe (1828), Lord Curzon (1837), Tattam (1839), v. Tischendorf (1845), Jullien (1881), Butler (1883).

The monastery produced several outstanding theologians, the most important being Abûnâ Naûm and Abûnâ 'Abd al-Masîh ibn Girgis al-Mas'ûdi (both of the 19th century). The monastery has five churches.

The Church of the Holy Virgin Mary (al-'Adhrâ) is so entangled in a maze of structures that it is difficult to see except its roof. To the north of the nave, near its western end the Church of St. Theodore the General is located (al-Amîr Tâdrus), in the west there is the baptistery. Added to the west of the Church of al-'Adhrâ is the Chapel of St. George (Mârî Girgis). At the north wall of the Church of al-'Adhrâ is a new (1957) ivory inlaid feretory with glass windows which contains the bodies of SS. Moses the Black and Theodosius.

The Church of al-'Adhrâ has altogether three haikals which show elements of widely different periods, some as old as the ninth century. The church is decorated with a number of icons representing SS. Antony and Paul the Theban, St. Onuphrius, SS. Maximus and Domitius, SS. Apollo and Apip, St. Barsum, St. Cyril and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Church of St. Theodore the General (al-Amîr Tâdrus) is entered from the nave of the main church. Its interior is almost dark and it is no longer used for services.

The Church of St. George (Mârî Girgis) is entered from the west end of the north aisle. The chapel is not used for services.

The 19th century Church of St. John the Baptist is situated in the north-eastern area of the monastery. The church, with its three haikals, was built by the Patriarch Cyril V in a modern Byzantine style.

The Church of St. Michael is situated on the second floor of the keep (qasr). The haikal is covered with a dome. The keep may possibly date back as early as the 7th century.

The keep has been for centuries the abode of solitaries, the most famous of whom was Abûnâ Sarabamûn (1920).

The walls around the monastery have a height of 10 to 11 metres and a thickness of about 2 metres. As in the case of the other monasteries, one has a magnificent view from the walls upon the interior of the monastery and the vastness of the desert.

The refectory, which is not used at present, is situated parallel to the main church. The visitor should note the stone lectern with its roughly incised cross.

The guest-house is a 19th century Levantine building, which is comfortably furnished, and is reserved for the accommodation of the patriarch and visitors.

The pictures which decorate the reception hall are those of Anba Athanasius, the late Metropolitan of Bani Suef, Anbâ Murqus, Metropolitan of Abû Tîg, Anbâ Sawîrûs, Metropolitan of Minya, Anbâ Banîâmin, the late Metropolitan of Menufiyah, Anbâ Tûmâ, the late Metropolitan of Tanta, Anbâ Makarîûs, the late Bishop of the Dair al-Barâmûs and Abûnâ Barnâbâ (Barnabas), at one time hegoumenos of the Dair al-Barâmûs.

The Dair al-Barâmûs, under the leadership of Anba Arsenius, is inhabited by 46 monks, though this number changes frequently. Four monks can live in the Nile Delta at Tûkh Dalaka where the monastery has its Dependency. During the last few years, many new cells have been built for the increasing number of monks.

Four and a half kilometres west of Dair al-Barâmûs is one of the few inhabited caves in the Wâdî al-Natrûn. Abûnâ 'Abd al-Masîh the Ethiopian has lived there since about 1935. Of the three caves, two are used by him. Some of the equipment of Abûnâ 'Abd al-Masîh is, without doubt, Second World War material. This solitary goes weekly to the Dair al-Barâmûs to obtain water, which he carries in an old gasoline tin on his head, as well as some bread.

3. — THE MONASTERY OF St. MACARIUS

The Monastery of St. Macarius (Dair Abû Maqâr) is the southernmost monastery of the monastery group of the Wâdî al-Natrûn. It can be seen west from the Cairo-Alexandria desert highway at about 129 km. to Alexandria or 86 to Cairo. One can reach the monastery with a jeep by turning into the desert at the road sign on the desert highway, which points to

the monastery. It is advisable to follow the tracks of the supply trucks conscientiously as long as they are visible in the ever shifting desert. The distance from the road sign to the monastery is approximately 8 km.

The foundation of the Dair Abû Maqâr is closely associated with the life of St. Macarius the Great. And with St. Macarius the Great (300-390 A.D.) the long history of the monastic life in the Wâdî al-Natrûn commences. He was the son of a village priest. As a young boy he learned the Holy Scriptures. As it was the custom, his parents decided for him to be married, but St. Macarius avoided association with his wife, because of his high esteem for virginity. As a camel driver, St. Macarius saw one day a vision of an angel, who promised him that his followers would inhabit the desert to which he had taken the camels.

Later, he withdrew to the Inner Desert where, at that time, no ascetics had settled. Thus he became the pioneer of the settlement, which was to produce so many Saints in the centuries that followed. His first settlement was in the vicinity of the present Dair al-Barâmûs.

After the death of SS. Maximus and Domitius, St. Macarius was led by an Angel to a certain rock, and there he was told to build a church. This church, then, with the cells around it, formed the nucleus of the present monastery. This means, that the monastic community of Abû Maqâr was founded prior to the death of the Saint in 390 A.D. In spite of the community that grew up around him, St. Macarius remained throughout his life an anchorite. He used to live in one of the cells which was connected by a tunnel to a small cave.

After the death of the great Saint, St. Paphnutius, who is described as possessing such a knowledge that he could expound the Holy Scriptures without reading from them, became his undisputed successor.

Three times in the course of the 5th century, the monastery was sacked by Berbers. In the third sack, some of the monks escaped to the keep, while the others, forty-nine monks, gladly submitted themselves to the swords of the invading Berbers.

Towards the middle of the 6th century, the monastery acquired great importance, when it became the offi-

cial residence of the Coptic Patriarchs, who were no longer permitted by their Byzantine rulers to reside in Alexandria.

In the 7th century, the monasteries, which were widely devastated by the fourth Berber attack, were rebuilt. The consecration of the new Church of St. Macarius by Patriarch Benjamin I took place in 650 A.D. Some of the outstanding monks of this period were St. John the Hegumen (d. 675), and SS. Abraham and George of Scetis (7th cent.). By the beginning of the 9th century, the Laura of St. Macarius is supposed to have contained a thousand cells. But again the monastery was sacked (866 A.D.). The Patriarch Shenute rebuilt the church and provided the monastery with a fortified wall. Much of the present monastery can be traced to the rebuilding activity of Patriarch Shenute.

In the beginning of the 11th century, the Monastery of St. Macarius gained in prominence, especially during the widespread persecutions of al-Hâkim (996-1021). The Patriarch Zacharias and most of the bishops had found refuge in the Wâdî al-Natrûn. It was at that time that a Turkish prince obtained the head of St. Mark the Evangelist. On learning that the Christians would pay a large sum of money for it, he took the head to Cairo and sold it for 300 dinars. Later, it was carried to the patriarch at the Monastery of St. Macarius.

In the middle of the 11th century, the Monastery of St. Macarius claimed more than half of the total number of monks in the Wâdî al-Natrûn.

As this monastery became patriarchal and, indeed, many of the patriarchs were chosen from among its monks, it became customary for the patriarchs to consecrate in it the Chrism (Myron), a ceremony which took place on the Thursday of Holy Week, though not annually, but at such times, when a fresh supply of Chrism was required by the Church. From the middle of the 14th century this monastery began to deteriorate.

The monastery was visited by Josse von Ghistele (1481) who was shown there a cloth with the signature of Muhammad. Arnold von Harff (1497) discovered there many underground caves like chapels and De Villamont (1590) found there those aquiline stones which are helpful to women in labour. Sandys (1611), on the other hand, mentions the Rose of Jericho at the monastery

which had the same effects as the aquiline stones for De Villamont.

In the 17th century, the monastery served temporarily as a seminary for Capuchin missionaries for the studying of Arabic and Coptic theology and liturgies.

The monastery had sheltered from the Middle Ages onwards a considerable library. The library remained intact until the 17th century when European bibliophiles discovered the treasures. The library was successively carried off by Cassien (1631), Agathangelus (1634), Goujon (1670), Huntingdon (1678), Sicard (1712), Assemani (1714), Sevin (1729), Tattam (1839), v. Tischendorf (1844), Chester (1873) and Evelyn White (1921).

When in 1656 Thévenot visited the monastery, he described it as the most dilapidated of the four monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn, and Du Bernat (1710) noticed only four monks there, while Granger (1730) found the monastery in ruins. By 1799, Andréossy counted again twenty monks at the monastery.

From a historical point of view, the Monastery of St. Macarius is the most interesting monastery in the Wâdî al-Natrûn. It has supplied more patriarchs (29) than any other monastery. The most significant building in the monastery is the Church of St. Macarius. The present church is merely a remnant of a once beautiful building, of which large portions have been destroyed. The church has two haikals, one dedicated to St. Benjamin (south), the other to St. John the Baptist (north). The eastern niche of the former haikal was at one time the seat of the patriarch. On the south of the choir stands the feretory with the bodily remains of the three Macarii and St. John the Short. The northern haikal, which is dedicated to St. John the Baptist, is interesting because of its « inner choir » and its shrine, which was built by Mikhâîl Yûsûf and his brother Bishoî in 1930.

The feretory contains the relics of the following patriarchs : Khâîl II (849-851), Khâîl III (880-907), Gabriel I (910-920), Cosmas III (920-932), Macarius (932-952), Christodoulus I (1047-1077), Cyril II (1078-1092), John V (1147-1166), Mark III (1166-1189), John XV and the son of Martinius, a minister in the reign of Theodosius the Younger.

The Church of St. Iskhiron of Killin has three haikals, though only two altars. The date of this church may well fall within the 14th century. The church is not used at present for divine services and serves as a storage place.

The Church of the Forty-nine Martyrs or al-Shuyûkh is used, at present, for the Liturgy during the Fast and on the Feast of the Nativity. During this period, the relics of the three Macarii and St. John the Short are transferred from the Church of St. Macarius and placed at the north wall of the choir.

The church is adorned with icons representing the three Macarii, St. Macarius, St. Mark, St. George and the Holy Virgin Mary. The church, as its name indicates, serves as the place of burial for the Forty-nine Martyrs.

The qasr of the Monastery of St. Macarius is by far the most interesting one of its kind, because of its many chapels and churches. One enters the qasr by a narrow draw-bridge which leads to the first story of the building. The interior of the tower is divided into three floors, the ground floor, the first and the second story.

On the first story of the qasr is the Chapel of the Holy Virgin, with three haikals. The screen which may be the work of a 13th century artist is the only thing worth seeing.

On the second story of the qasr are located the three churches which are remarkable on account of their wall paintings. The Church of St. Michael is the most northern church.

> It has one haikal which has a beautiful screen. The south wall of the church is decorated with pictures representing a whole gallery of Warrior-Saints : St. Eusebius, St. Basilides, St. Justus, St. Apoli and St. Theoclia. On the north wall within the choir screen is a painting of St. Michael, and a little further to the east a small figure, probably that of St. Hilaria, the daughter of the Emperor Zeno.

In the nave of the church there are altogether nine pillars with rather interesting capitals, some Doric, others Corinthian with crosses carved among the foliage.

The Church of St. Antony, St. Paul and St. Pachomius is situated south of the Church of St. Michael on the second floor. On the north wall of the chapel are paintings of the three founders of Egyptian monasticism to whom the church is dedicated.

The Church of the Hermits or Wanderers (al-Suwwâh) is the southern-most of the three churches on the second floor.

The wall paintings of the church represent nine figures of hermits. These are : St. Samuel, St. John, St. Onuphrius, St. Abraham, St. George, St. Apollo, St. Apip, St. Misail and St. Pidjimi.

Among the new features of the monastery are the plantations to the east outside the original walls. This garden was begun in 1925 by Anbâ Abrâm who served as hegoumenos of the monastery and as Bishop of Balyanâ. In 1954, a round shaped water tower was built.

In May 1970, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn and his thirteen disciples abandoned their caves in the Wâdî al-Rayân and settled at the Monastery of St. Macarius, where they inhabit the newly constructed cells built outside the mediaeval walls. The new buildings, three stories high, provide two room cells with kitchen facilities for each monk.

The monastery is under the jurisdiction of Anbâ Mikhâîl, the Metropolitan of Asyût.

4. — THE MONASTERY OF ST. BISHOI

The Monastery of St. Bishoi (Dair Anbâ Bishoî) in the Wâdî al-Natrûn is easily accessible to any visitor. From the Rest House at Wâdî al-Natrûn, the visitor may proceed with his car to the village of Wâdî al-Natrûn. At the police station turn to the left and follow the track, crossing after 1 1/2 km. the old Salt and Soda Co. railroad tracks. Continue along the track until one sees a salt-lake on the right. Two monasteries

are visible, the Monastery of St. Bishoi on the left (south) and the Monastery of the Syrians on the right (north).

Since the building of the Wâdî al-Natrûn Youth Camp in 1961, the monks of the Monastery of St. Bishoi and the Monastery of the Syrians are more restrictive in permitting visitors to enter the monasteries.

As is the case with all Coptic monasteries, the foundation of the Monastery of St. Bishoi is associated with the life of its Patron Saint. St. Bishoi was one of a family of many children. When an Angel of God appeared unto him, he called him into the desert. He responded willingly to the call, and went to Scetis, where he joined St. John the Short, who had lived by himself for many years. But after a while, St. John the Short recommended to St. Bishoi to leave him and to live by himself in a cave elsewhere. While observing the solitary life, St. Bishoi had several visions of the Lord Jesus Christ who appeared to him.

On the occasion of the first sack of the Monastery in 407 A.D., both St. Bishoi and St. John the Short made their escape. The former found refuge in a mountain near the Fayyûm, where he met the anchorite Paul of Tammûah with whom he cultivated a great friendship. St. John the Short went to the Monastery of St. Antony. Three months after St. Bishoi's arrival in the Fayyûm, however, he died.

Like the Monastery of St. Macarius, the Monastery of the Romans and the Monastery of St. John the Short, the Monastery of St. Bishoi suffered the five sacks by the Berbers. Al-Maqrîzî refers especially to the fourth destruction of Dair Anbâ Bishoî which according to him occurred during the patriarchate of Andronicus (616-623 A.D.). The Patriarch Benjamin I (623-662 A.D.), however, reconstructed the Monastery of St. Bishoi.

When the time of the persecutions by the Berbers had come to an end (9th cent.), the bodies of SS. Bishoi and Paul of Tammûah were returned to the Monastery of St. Bishoi.

In 1096, the monastery suffered another pillage. At the time of the Patriarch Benjamin II (1327-1339) considerable restoration of this monastery was undertaken, for ants had destroyed much of the wood-work and the buildings threatened to collapse.

The monastery was visited by Coppin (1638), Thévenot (1657), who regarded it as the best of the four Wâdî al-Natrûn monasteries, Wansleben (1672), Sicard (1712) who found only four monks present, Granger (1730), Sonnini (1778), Andréossy (1799), Curzon (1837), and Tattam (1839), who acquired numerous *MSS* from the monastery. Wilkinson (1843) saw thirteen monks in the monastery, and Junkers (1875) was not permitted to enter because a European had stolen several *MSS*. Jullien (1881) felt that the monastery could boast of the best water, which was substantiated by Butler (1883).

The visitor to the Monastery of St. Bishoi will find there five churches. The Church of St. Bishoi, which is the main church, the Church of St. Iskhiron, the Church of the Holy Virgin, the Church of St. George and the Church of St. Michael on the roof of the keep.

The Church of St. Bishoi has three haikals, and it belongs to the most ancient part of the monastery, dating back to the 9th century. Set in the floor, at the western end of the church is the lakan, a marble basin, which is used in the Maundy Thursday Rite of the Foot-washing. In the southwest corner of the nave there stands the new dignified feretory of St. Benjamin which is adorned with icons of the three Macarii, St. Matthew, St. Thomas and the Crucifixion. The church, which has undergone several restorations was newly redecorated in 1957. In the northeast corner of the choir there stands the feretory which contains the bodily remains of SS. Bishoi and Paul of Tammûah. Moreover, the monks claim the relics of St. Ephraem the Syrian. This church is used by the monks during the summer months for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

The Church of St. Iskhiron is reached from the south side of the choir of the main church. To the north of the haikal is the baptistery.

To the north-east of the main Church is the Church of the Holy Virgin. This church is used during the winter months for the Divine Liturgy. The Church of St. George is not used now for services.

The refectory of the monastery is connected with the western end of the church. South-east of the church is the kitchen and bakehouse.

The keep of the monastery is entered at the first story level by means of a draw-bridge which rests on the roof of the gate-house. On the second story of the keep is the Church of St. Michael. The icons on the iconostasis which date from the 18th century have been restored. They show the twelve apostles vested in pontifical vestments. In no other monastery do we find the Church of St. Michael so isolated, as in the Monastery of Anbâ Bishoî. It is probable, therefore, that at one time, the keep had an additional floor like those of the other monasteries. The date of the keep is to be assigned to the 12th century.

At one time, the library was stored in the qasr. This is no longer the case. A small room in the monastery yard contains the remains of the library.

The most recent installations in the monastery are a power-generator to supply the monastery with electricity, and a new water pump, south of the qasr. A second belfry was erected in 1955.

The monastery is presently administered by the bishop of the Monastery of the Syrians.

5. — THE MONASTERY OF THE SYRIANS

The Monastery of the Syrians (Dair al-Surîân) is situated 500 metres north-west of the Monastery of St. Bishoi. Like the Monastery of St. Bishoi it is easily accessible.

For many centuries the name of St. John Kame has been closely associated with the Monastery of the Syrians, for, after the destruction of the Monastery of St. John Kame between 1330 and 1442, the monks of that monastery migrated to the Syrian Monastery, transferring at the same time the relics of their Patron Saint. This transfer of Coptic monks to the Syrian Monastery may be the explanation for

the presence of the two national groups in the Syrian Monastery at the beginning of the 15th century.

Because of this historical association with St. John Kame, let us briefly outline his life.

St. John Kame (d. 859 A.D.) was a native of Jebromounonson in the district of Sais. At an early age he was forced into marriage, but persuaded his wife to consent to a life of virginity, and to permit him to live the life of a monk. Inspired by a vision, he entered the Wâdî al-Natrûn, where he became a disciple of St. Teroti who inhabited a cell in the vicinity of the Monastery of St. Macarius.

After some time, an Angel directed him to go to the cell of St. John the Short, where he was advised to make a dwelling for himelf. Here, the saint established himself by shutting himself up in a cave. St. John Kame is known for his famous visions of the Holy Virgin.

Before long, the virtues of St. John Kame attracted some 300 disciples who gathered around him. For the community of this monastery, he drew up canons and regulations, and he required from his monks that they meet together in the middle of the night, and that they should sing psalmody and spiritual songs until the light dawned.

The Monastery of the Syrians was founded in the 6th century as a consequence of the Gaianite heresy. It was the duplicate, or Theotokos monastery of the Monastery of St. Bishoi, to which the Orthodox monks withdrew. The name Theotokos, or Mother of God monastery, was derived from the importance with which the Orthodox monks regarded the doctrine of the Incarnation. The teachings of the Gaianites were considered by their opponents as a Docetist heresy, which denying the doctrine of the Incarnation, lowered the status of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To emphasize their Orthodoxy, they retained the name of the Patron Saint and added to it the title of the Theotokos. Thus the Monastery of the Syrians was known as the Theotokos Monastery of St. Bishoi.

When, however, this heresy passed away, the duplicate monastery had no longer any purpose. In the beginning of the 8th century it was purchased by Syrian merchants of Tekrit for the use of Syrian monks.

The first Syrian monks to be associated with the monastery arrived in the Wâdî al-Natrûn at the beginning of the 9th century. They were Matthew and Abraham of the city of Tekrit, and there is good reason to believe that they settled in the Western desert about the time of the fifth sack of the desert monasteries.

In the 10th century the Monastery of the Syrians gained in prominence and importance. Incised in the haikal-screen of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is an important reference in Syriac. It speaks of the Abbot Moses of Nisibis who had the doors constructed during the patriarchates of Cosmas III of Alexandria (920-932 A.D.) and Basil of Antioch (932-935 A.D.). Moses is also credited with valuable additions to the monastery library.

During the patriarchate of Philotheus (979-1003), the Syrian monastery was associated with the Copts.

By the 11th century, according to the census taken by Mawhûb, the Syrian monastery rated as the third largest community in the Wâdî al-Natrûn. With its sixty monks, it was as large as the Monastery of St. Bishoi and the Monastery of the Romans together.

In the middle of the 14th century, the monastery suffered a most serious setback, for at this time the Black Death swept over Egypt and took a terrible toll of the monks of the Wâdî al-Natrûn. A note in a Syriac *MS.* states that a visitor found in the Monastery of the Syrians but a single monk.

By the end of the 15th century, the monastery seems to have recuperated, for when Ignatius XI, Patriarch of Antioch, visited the Wâdî al-Natrûn, the monastery was inhabited by Syrian monks. In 1516, there were altogether forty-three monks in the monastery of whom eighteen were Syrians and twenty-five Egyptians. From this time onward the Egyptian element was predominant. In the 16th century, the monastery was so strong that it could dispatch 50% of its monks to the Monasteries of St. Antony and St. Paul which in 1484 were destroyed by the Bedouins. With the help of twenty monks of the Monastery of the Syrians, the Monastery of St. Antony was rebuilt. Ten monks of the Syrian monastery were commissioned to assist in the reconstruction of the Monastery of St. Paul. There is no better proof of the inner strength and vitality of the Syrian monastery than this gesture.

Coppin (1638) was one of the first travellers to visit the monastery in search for *MSS*. Thévenot (1657) called it « very pleasant » and the best in order of all. All travellers refer to the staff of St. Ephraem which took root and blossomed and grew into a large tree. When Huntingdon (1679) visited the monastery, the Syrian occupation had terminated.

The large Syriac collection of *MSS*. attracted many European bibliophiles. Elias Assemani (1707) secured 40 vols. from the monastery, others were obtained for the Vatican by J.S. Assemani (1715). Granger (1730) was refused entry to the library, and Browne (1792) found it impossible to obtain any *MSS*. Andréossy (1799) removed some *MSS*. It was Lord Curzon (1837) who purchased a considerable quantity of *MSS*. His account of the purchase is a classic in English literature. More significant even was Curzon's discovery of an Ethiopian community in the south-east corner of the monastery.

Tattam (1839) secured many *MSS*. for the British Museum, while v. Tischendorf (1844) obtained only a few parchment sheets. The British Museum obtained over 200 items from Pacho (1847). Brugsch (1852) was unable to purchase any *MSS*. Other visitors were Lansing (1862), Chester (1873), Junkers (1875), Jullien (1881) and Butler (1883).

The monks of this monastery observe the five seasons of fasting very strictly, during which visitors to the Monastery of the Syrians are not permitted to enter the monastery. Forty-three days before the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, three days commemorating Jonah in the Whale (Monday to Wednesday before the Fast of Heraclius) fifty-five days before Lent, the Fast of the Holy Apostles which extends from Pentecost until July 12, and fifteen days in commemoration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary from August 7 to August 22.

The Monastery of the Syrians is the leading monastery of the Wâdî al-Natrûn monastic group. The shape of the monastery has given rise to a strange interpretation by the monks. The proportion of its length to its breadth is roughly that of a ship, and this has led to the tradition that the monastery was built on the model of the Ark of Noah.

The principal church of the monastery is that of the Holy Virgin. Because of its artistic treasures, this church has repeatedly attracted the attention of archaeologists and architects. A date round about 980 A.D. is reasonable to accept for the building of the church. In the nave, almost in the middle, is the basin for the Maundy Thursday Rite of Foot-washing. At the eastern end of the north aisle stands the feretory of St. John Kame. In the semi-dome above the western end of the nave is a wall painting of the Ascension of Christ which shows the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Apostles (10th cent.). From the western end of the north aisle one passes through a narrow passage to the Cell of St. Bishoi, a small square structure with an altar built against the east wall. The cell is roofed by a vaulted ceiling into which a hook has been driven. Supposedly, St. Bishoi used to pray in this cell day and night, his hair being tied to the hook to prevent him from falling asleep or sinking down.

The most outstanding feature of the Church of the Holy Virgin is the choir and the sanctuary doors with their ivory inlaid panels. More interesting even are the sanctuary doors.

While the choir door has only six rows, the sanctuary door has seven rows of panels. The first row has six figures. The two central panels show Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary, the second and fifth panels show the Egyptian and the Syrian patriarchs, St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, while the two outer panels show the two great patriarchs St. Dioscorus, the 25th Patriarch of Alexandria (444-454 A.D.) and St. Severus I, the first Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch (512-518 A.D.).

The second row of panels shows a repeated pattern of circles so interlaced as to form crosses. The third row has in each of the six fields six linked circles which are arranged in pairs, each circle containing a cross. The fourth row, though somewhat damaged, has in each panel a cross enclosed by a four-leafed shamrock with a trefoil at the junction of each leaf. The fifth row has in each panel six swastikas enclosed by circles. The sixth row is a dark grill on a white ground based on linked circles. The seventh row has a pattern of a plain cross in a double-stepped framing, the design of the cross thus

filling the whole panel. The date of this interesting piece of workmanship is to be assigned to the 10th century.

The semi-domes which constitute in part the roof of the choir have two interesting wall paintings. The southern semi-dome has the Annunciation and the Nativity of our Lord, the northern semi-dome the Falling-Asleep (Dormition) of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Attached to the west wall of the choir is a marble tablet (stele) with a Coptic text commemorating St. John Kame. The text informs us of the date of the death of St. John Kame, in 859 A.D.

The haikal of the church is decorated with stucco ornaments. The altar is covered with a slab of black marble which was probably imported by the Syrians at the time of the building of the church. This church is at present used for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy during the summer months, whilst during the winter months, the monks hold their services in the Cave Church.

The Church of the Lady Mary (Sitt Mariam) or the Cave Church is situated in the north-eastern part of the monastery. The church has three haikals and a nave with a marble lakane-tank. When this church is in use, the relics of St. John Kame are removed from the Church of the Holy Virgin and are placed on the northside of the doorway of this church.

The Church of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste is situated north of the Church of the Holy Virgin adjoining the east of the porch. In this church, Christodoulus, the Abûnâ of Ethiopia was buried (1624). Apart from this, the church is of little interest.

The Church of SS. Hinnis and Marutha is situated west of the Church of the Lady Mary. This church may be placed into the 15th century.

The keep of the monastery stands to the west of the northern gate and comprises a basement and three upper

storys. On the first story Lord Curzon discovered many *MSS*. The second story is of less historical interest, while the third story contains the Church of St. Michael.

Around the traditional Tamarind Tree of St. Ephraem there has been built the new printing press with a manually controlled printing machine. Here pamphlets, catalogue cards and small books dealing with theological studies are printed. In front of the printing press, the monks assemble daily about 5 p.m. for vespers.

The water tower, which was built in 1955-1956, provides the monastery with running water, and it is situated in the eastern part of the monastery. It is 13 m. high and has a capacity of 45 cubic meters.

During the sixties of this century, the monastic buildings have undergone major alterations. The guesthouse with the library and museum, built in 1914 by Qummus Maksîmûs Salîb (1895-1939) was replaced by additional cells. A special library building and museum were constructed. The well catalogued library contains more than 3,000 volumes and several hundred valuable manuscripts. The collection of Coptica includes several very fine 16th and 17th century Coptic icons, several Ethiopica, a 12th century Nubian marble tray, fragments of a mediaeval haikal-screen as well as a wooden feretory.

This feretory, which is said to be contemporary with the haikal-screens of the Church of the Holy Virgin, belongs to the 10th century.

> Tradition asserts that the feretory contained some relics of St. Severus, St. Dioscorus, SS. Cyriacus and his mother Julietta, St. Theodore the Oriental, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, St. James the Persian, St. John the Short, St. Moses the Black and some hair of St. Mary Magdalene. These relics are now preserved in a separate tube and kept together with those of St. John Kame.

Until the middle of the 20th century, the Monastery of the Syrians had only one gate, that is, the one which is situated in the western part of the north wall. A few years

ago, the southern part of the east wall was broken through, and a gate with an imposing staircase leads to the monastery plantation.

The monastery farm, which is located in the north-eastern part of the plantation, has a large variety of domestic animals including camels, donkeys, cattle, goats, sheep and poultry.

In the space between the plantation and the monastery there is a retreat house, where church groups, students and young people can spend time in study and contemplation.

6. — THE HILL OF SARAPAMON

About 3 km. in north-westerly direction from the Monastery of the Syrians is situated the Hill of Sarapamon. Two caves are situated on the northern slope, and two caves on the southern slope of the hill. Among the monks who inhabited these caves were Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn and Abûnâ 'Abd al-Mirîam. Four hundred metres north of the Hill of Sarapamon is another elevation with several caves, almost all of them covered with sand. These caves were inhabited by Abûnâ Mînâ and Abûnâ Istafânûs.

> A typical cave has a sandstone body and a limestone roof. It is about 3.50 m. long, 1 m. wide, and 1.10 m. high, except for a small space which has a height of 1.70 m. which enables the hermit to stand for his prayers. Near the entrance of the cave the hermit has a small desk and a mat where he can study and write. A shelf, hewn in the rock, contains devotional books, Bibles, etc. Another alcove next to his desk provides some space for additional books and his keys, for the cave can be locked. At the end of the cave is the hermit's bed of sandstone. Furthermore, there is a little kitchen in the cave, where he prepares his meagre food.

Another ancient cave, inhabited by a hermit, is situated about 12 km. south of the Monastery of St. Bishoi. This cave is situated on a high hill overlooking the Desert of the Wâdî al-Fâregh. That this cave was inhabited in ancient

times is evident from an old pottery jar which was discovered, when the entrance to the cave was rebuilt.

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CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIANITY IN THE DELTA OF THE NILE

The first appointment of bishops outside of Alexandria is ascribed to Demetrius I (188-230 A.D.), an obvious mark of the extension of organized Christianity to Lower and Upper Egypt. However, the history of Christianity in the villages and towns of the Nile Delta is rather obscure. On the one hand, the annual inundation of the Nile has destroyed many records and remains, on the other hand, the very definite and successful penetration of Islâm in Lower Egypt was not conducive for the preservation of Christian antiquities.

The Coptic Orthodox Church has six dioceses in the Delta, namely the *Diocese of al-Sharqiya* with the episcopal residence in Zaqaziq. This diocese comprises all churches in the Province of al-Sharqiya, as well as those in the Governorates of Port Said and Suez. The *Diocese of al-Daqahlia* has its episcopal residence in Mansûra. This diocese comprises all churches in the District of Mansûra, al-Sinbillâwein, Aga, Mît Ghamr, Dikirnis of the Province of al-Daqahlia and Talkha. The *Diocese of Gharbiya* has its episcopal residence in Tanta. This diocese comprises all the churches in the district of Tanta, Mahallah al-Kubra, Samannûd, Zifta, Kafr al-Zaiyât, al-Santa and Basyûn. *The Diocese of al-Beheira* has its episcopal residence in Damanhûr. This diocese comprises all churches in the Districts of Damanhûr, Rashîd (Rosetta), al-Mahmûdiyah, Shûbra Khit, Ityai al-Barûd, al-Dilingât, Kom Hamada, Abû Hummus. *The Dio-*

cese of al-Menufiya with the episcopal residence in Shibîn al-Kom comprises all churches in the province of al-Menufiya. The *Diocese of al-Qalyûbiya* has its episcopal residence situated at Banha. The diocese comprises all churches in the the Districts of Quweisna, Qalyûb, Shibîn al-Qanatir and Banha. The *Diocese of Damietta* with the episcopal residence in Dimyât includes the pilgrimage shrine of Sitt Dimiana.

1. — PATRIARCHAL CELLS IN THE NILE DELTA

For the first millennium of our era, most of the patriarchs of the Coptic Church resided in Alexandria, except for brief intervals, when political conditions forced them to take up their residence either in the Desert Monastery of St. Macarius or in the Rîf, i.e. the Delta (1). Eutychius (Sa'îd ibn al-Bitrîq) (933-940 A.D.) the Melkite patriarch and historian states in his *Annales*, that at the time of the massacre of the Copts about 551 A.D., a great multitude of the Copts took to flight to the Wâdî Habîb, i.e. Wâdî al-Natrûn, to the Monastery of St. Macarius, and since that time the patriarchal see of the Jacobites has been in the Monastery of St. Macarius to this day (2).

Even if we question the historicity of the massacre and the flight of the Copts to Wâdî al-Natrûn, the fact remains that Apollinarius, who was both commander of the forces and the Melkite Patriarch, expelled the Coptic hierarchy from Alexandria. Moreover, this expulsion of the Coptic patriarch was not just a temporary measure, in so far as it is recorded of Anastasius, the 36th Coptic Patriarch (605-616 A.D.), that he ventured into the city although the Orthodox bishops were forbidden to enter Alexandria. Therefore there is no doubt that at least for some time the Coptic Patriarchs being excluded from Alexandria, must have chosen a new ecclesiastical centre. We know that the Mon-

(1) Burmester, O. H. E., KHS-, « *The Rif of Egypt.* » Orientalia, VIII, pp. 96 ff.

(2) Pococke, Edward (ed.), *Annals*, London, 1656, II, pp. 148 ff.

astery of St. Macarius enjoyed certain patriarchal privileges, thus for example, the newly elected patriarchs were required, after their consecration in Alexandria, to submit to a second ceremony of enthronement in the Monastery of St. Macarius (1). Furthermore, the patriarchs used to spend Lent or at least a part of it in the Monastery of St. Macarius, where they celebrated the Divine Liturgy. This custom began in the beginning of the 9th century (2). One of the most important functions of the Coptic patriarchs was the Consecration of the Holy Chrism in Holy Week, which also used to take place in the Monastery of St. Macarius. This custom began with Menas II (956-974 A.D.).

The first Coptic patriarch, who officially removed the patriarchal residence from Alexandria to the Rîf was Cosmas II, the 54th Patriarch of Alexandria (851-858 A.D.) In the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church,* we read that « there was chosen from him a town of the Eastern part of Egypt, known as Damîrah, all the inhabitants of which were Christians, and the father, the patriarch, dwelt there on account of the afflictions that were at Alexandria » (3). Here, Cosmas II lived in quietness and peace during these days, « while the notables of Cairo were taking charge of his affairs and bearing his burden, they did not let him be in need for the support of his cell » (4).

Damîrah or Dimairah in the district of Talkha is situated seven kilometres north-west of Mansûra or five kilometres east of Naburâh. Today, there are three villages with the name of Damîrah : Kafr Damîrah al-Gedîd, which is the northernmost village, Damîrah, and Kafr Damîrah al-Qadîm, which is also known as the Damîrah of the south. With regard to the ancient and mediaeval Damîrah, we turn to Kafr Damîrah al-Qadîm, which is one of those many typical Nile Delta villages, which are built upon a *kôm,* an elevated site.

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(1) E.g. Macarius I (932-952 A.D.), Macarius, II (1101-1128), Gabriel, II (1131-1145).

(2) E.g. Jacob (819-831 A.D.), Joseph (831-849 A.D.), Khâîl, II (849-851 A.D.), Shenute (859-880 A.D.).

(3) *HPEC,* II, i, p. 4.

(4) *Ibid.,* p. 16.

In the Coptic traditions, Damîrah is referred to in the *Coptic Synaxarium*. On the 14th of Bashons (22nd of May), the Coptic Church commemorates the martyrdom of Epimachus of Pelusium, who went to al-Bakrug near Damîrah where he suffered many tortures. On the 25th of Abîb (1st of August), Hilaria, a native of Demelliana near Damîrah, suffered martyrdom. There is no question, that Kafr Damîrah al-Qadîm was an important Christian centre. During the patriarchate of Alexander II (705-730 A.D.) we hear of a certain John, a native of Damîrah, who had authority to command and to forbid (1).

During the reign of Abû'l-Qâsim Unjur, St. George the New Martyr, suffered martyrdom in front of the Church of St. Michael at Damîrah, when he was beheaded by the Governor (959 A.D.). Afterwards, the local Christians built a church in his honour in the village of Tabanûha, about 3 km. west of Damîrah. The St. George of Damîrah is commemorated by the Coptic Church on the 19th of Baûnah (June 26). In addition to being a large and important Christian centre, Damîrah was also known for its significant Jewish settlement. Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela (1060-1173) noticed, that « this place contains seven hundred Jews » (2).

From the 11th to the 14th century, Damîrah was a Coptic episcopal see. During the patriarchate of Cyril II (1078-1092) we hear of five bishops, who complained because of the conduct of the patriarch, who had accorded certain favours to some of his bishops. Among the five bishops, there is listed also the bishop of Damîrah (3). In 1086, Cyril II convened an episcopal synod for the purpose of issuing new canons pertaining to ecclesiastical practices and customs (4). Among the forty-seven bishops, who attended the

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(1) HPCC, *P.O.*, V, p. 57.

(2) Asher, A., *The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela*. London, 1840, Vol. I, p. 154.

(3) Muyser, J., Contribution à l'Etude des Listes Episcopales de l'Eglise Copte, BSAC. X, 1944, p. 151. Manssâ'l-Qummus, *History of the Coptic Church* (arab.). Cairo, 1924, p. 518. Ya'qûb Nahlah Rufailah, *History of the Coptic Nation* (arab.), Cairo, 1898, p. 147.

(4) Burmester, KHS-, Le Muséoin, XLIX, 1936, pp. 245-288.

synod, there was also John, Bishop of Damîrah (1). At the time of the death of John VI (1189-1216), several candidates solicited the patriarchal throne. In connection with this affair, Hazkiyah (Ezekiel), Bishop of Damîrah and of Baramûn, is mentioned (2). In 1240, Cyril III ibn Laqlaq convened an episcopal synod for the promulgation of new ecclesiastical canons (3). Among the bishops, who attended the synod, there was Mark. Bishop of Talkha and of Damîrah. Moreover, the 14th century list of episcopal sees of the Coptic Manuscript 53 of the John Rylands Library (Manchester) still refers to the see of Damîrah (4).

The fact that Damîrah continued to enjoy a privileged position among the villages in the Delta is also attested by the visit of Cyril II, 67th Patriarch of Alexandria, who « journeyed to Damîrah, after having taken permission from the Sultân... and he remained there a number of months » (5). Damîrah must have been one of the wealthier dioceses in the Nile Delta, for it is recorded that part of the lands of the diocese of Damîrah, which was patriarchal, was bestowed upon the Monastery of St. Macarius in the Wâdî al-Natrûn, and Mawhûb states, that Cyril II transferred these lands in 1086 (6).

Today, Damîrah is an exclusively Muslim village with four mosques, two of which were built upon the ruins of a church. The villagers who eagerly provided information about these two mosques, repeatedly emphasized that at one time these particular sites were occupied by Christian Churches.

There is the Mosque of Shaikh al-'Amrî ('Amr ibn al-'As, the conqueror of Egypt), also known as the Great Mosque, which was rebuilt in 1322 A.H. or 1904. In the room

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(1) Munier, H., *Receuil des Listes Episcopales de l'Eglise Copte*. Cairo, 1943, p. 27.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 30.
(3) Burmester, KHS-, BSAC, XII, pp. 81-136.
(4) Munier, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
(5) HPEC, II, iii, p. 334.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 331. Also, Evelyn White, H., *The Monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn*. New York, 1932, II, p. 358.

for the ritual ablutions to the west of the Mosque, there stands at the north-wall a marble column (1.55 m.) with an Ionian capital. The height of the volutes is 17 cm, the length of the abacus is 66 cm. The height of the base is 40 cm. and its diameter is 58 cm. Another column, though without a capital, exists in the immediate proximity of the Mosque of Sidî Burhan Abû 'Alî which is also known as the Mosque of the Forty Martyrs. This Mosque of the Forty Martyrs is situated near the Mosque of Shaikh al-'Amrî. According to the local Islamic tradition, these Forty Martyrs were soldiers in the Arab army of 'Amr ibn al-'As and fell in the course of the Arab Conquest. The Mosque was built by 'Alî Bey al-Fâr in 1290 A.H. or 1873, and restored in 1345 A.H. or 1926. The tomb of the Forty Martyrs is situated within the Mosque. It is interesting to note, that in the neighbouring villages of Naburâh, Damîrah al-Gedîd, Dirin and Bashbish, etc., there are also mosques of the Forty Martyrs. It seems almost certain, that in these villages the Islamic Forty Martyrs replace the Forty Martyrs of the Christians who, in this case, were the Forty Virgins, who together with St. Dimiana suffered martyrdom at al-Za'farân, 12 km. northwest of Biyala. There is good reason to believe, therefore, that in these instances we have additional examples of cult-transferences and that all of these mosques were built upon the sites of former churches which were dedicated to St. Dimiana and her Forty Virgins. This is more plausible, since the veneration of St. Dimiana and her Forty Virgins is very widespread in the Nile Delta, and especially among the Muslim peasantry (1).

We presume that the successors of Cosmas II returned to Alexandria, although we are informed that Gabriel I, the 57th Patriarch of Alexandria (910-920 A.D.), remained «during the whole of his patriarchate in Wâdî Habîb, and that he did not leave it and did not live in the Rîf nor in Misr nor in Alexandria» (2).

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(1) Leeder, S. H., *Modern Sons of the Pharaohs*. London, 1918, p. 145.

(2) *HPEC*, II, ii, p. 117.

Menas II, the 61st Patriarch of Alexandria (965-974 A.D.), apparently resided in the Rîf, for at the time of the seven years famine, he transferred his residence to the village of Mahallah Dânyâl in the district of Tîdâ, (1) where he remained for one year. Here, the patriarch built a «fine altar» dedicated to St. Mark and bore the Chrism to it (2). During his stay at Mahallah Dânyâl, Menas II and his disciples were supported by a notable lady, named Dinah, who was of the inhabitants of Balkunâh (3). Whereas Abraham, the 62nd Patriarch of Alexandria (975-978 A.D.), did not reside in the Nile Delta we know that Philotheus, the 36th Patriarch of Alexandria (979-1003), dwelt at Mahallah Dânyal when Abba Macarius, Bishop of Menuf and secretary of the Synod, advised the patriarch to exchange the patriarchal cell at Mahallah Dânyal «for a good dwelling place at Damrûâ» (4).

With regard to the location of the village of Mahallah Dânyâl we know no more than the information provided for us in the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church.* As M. Simaika Pasha points out, the village of Mahallah Dânyâl no longer exists (5). It is possible, of course that in the course of the centuries, the name of the village has changed, for there are many instances where the name of the village or the town has been altered. Between the small towns of Disûq and Basyûn, both on the east bank of the Rosetta branch of the Nile, the village of Mahallah Diyai is situated almost opposite to Shubra Khît. The *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* informs us that Mahallah Dânyâl belonged to the district of Tîdâ. The village of Kafr Tîdâ, which now belongs to the district of Kafr al-Shaikh, is situated 22 km. north-east of Mahallah Diyai. Moreover,

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(1) Amélineau, E., *La Géographie de l'Egypte à l'Epoque Copte.* Paris, 1893, p. 504.

(2) *HPEC,* II, ii, p. 134.

(3) Guest, A. R., «The Delta in the Middle Ages.» *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1912, pp. 966-967.

(4) *HPEC,* II, ii. p. 151.

(5) Simaika Pasha, M., *Guide to the Coptic Museum* (Arab. edition), Cairo, 1930-1932, vol. II, pp. 232, 233.

Balkunâh, the home of Dinah and now the village of Balankûna, is situated only 6 km. east of Mahallah Diyai. In view of these considerations, it is very likely, that the village of Mahallah Diyai may be the patriarchal cell of Mahallah Dânyâl.

For almost one hundred years, i.e. from 975 A.D. to about 1061 A.D. Damrûâ served as cell or residence of the Coptic patriarchs (1). In the days of al-'Aziz (975-996 A.D.), Macarius, the secretary of the Synod advised Philotheus to move the patriarchal residence to Damrûâ, where Menas, the Bishop of Tanah and the brother of Macarius, was living. The patriarchal quarters must have been quite extensive, for the patriarch used to receive and entertain there certain people of the inhabitants of Damrûâ, as well as the members of his family and of his near relatives, whose usual custom was to sit and to drink with him (2). In 1003, Philotheus died, and Zacharias (1004-1032) ascended the patriarchal throne. Zacharias also took up his residence in the patriarchal cell at Damrûâ, where he was frequently visited by bishops, priests, monks and laymen. Zacharias built at Damrûâ the «Great Church», i.e. the patriarchal cathedral. Thus, Damrûâ rose rapidly in importance and it seems to have been entirely inhabited by Christians, and being at some distance from any seat of the Muslim Government, it may have escaped notice for some years. Zacharias was succeeded by Shenute II, the 65th Patriarch of Alexandria (1032-1046). Following the practice of his immediate predecessors, Shenute II also resided at Damrûâ and completed the building of the « Great Church » (3). At this time, Damrûâ was well known, for even prior to his election to the patriarchate, Shenute II had vowed to spend much money on the completion of the patriarchal cathedral. The fourth and the last patriarch to reside at Damrûâ was Christodoulus, the 66th Patriarch of Alexandria (1047-1077). During the

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(1) Meinardus, O., « Damrûâ : Past and Present, » *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Egypte*, XXXVIII, 1965, pp. 195-199.

(2) *HPEC*, II, ii, p. 170.

(3) *HPEC*, II, ii, p. 239.

time of his patriarchate, Damrûâ increased even more in importance and also in size, so that it was known as the «Second Constantinople» with seventeen churches, most of which were restored (1). Christodoulus also built in Damrûâ a new patriarchal residence, and over its door he had engraved the Trinitarian Formula : «In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost ». Abûl Husain 'Abd al-Wahhâb ibn 'Alî al-Sinraki, the kâdi, went to meet Christodoulus in Damrûâ, and when he read the words engraved over the entrance of the door, he complained to al-Yazurî, the wazîr. The wazîr ordered the churches to be closed and the Trinitarian formula to be erased from the patriarchal residence (2). Trouble between the pariarch and the sultan led to the arrest of Christodoulus, and they found in his dwelling place in Damrûâ a basin, in which there were six thousand dinars tied up in a red cloak. The money was confiscated and taken to the Treasury and Christodoulus returned to Damrûâ (3). In the latter part of the reign of Christodoulus, some forty thousand horsemen of the Lewatis besides their attendants invaded the Nile Delta and went to Damrûâ and took the patriarch from his dwelling place and plundered all that was in it, and took a lot of money which he had (4). The patriarch then took temporary refuge in Alexandria and subsequently transferred the patriarchal residence to Cairo. Most, if not all, of the churches and the patriarchal residence, which, at that time, would have been built with burnt bricks and mud bricks, were destroyed.

The present Damrûâ comprises the three villages of Kafr Damrûâ, Shubra Nabat or Shubra Damrûâ and Damrûâ Khammarah, which are situated 17 km north of al-Mahallah al-Kubra and 21 km west of al-Mansûra in the Province of al-Gharbiya. These three villages, of which Kafr Damrûâ is the southernmost, appear as a single unit without any

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(1) *HPEC*, II, ii, p. 268.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *HPEC*, II, ii. p. 275.

(4) *HPEC*, II, ii, iii, pp. 279, 314.

visible boundaries. Within these three villages, there are no archaeological or architectural remains of churches. There are three mosques, the Mosques of Sîdi Muhammad Abû'l-Ru'ûs and the New Mosque or the Great Mosque, which serves the people of Shubra Damrûâ and Kafr Damrûâ, and the Mosque of Muhammad al-Damrî ibn Sâlih, which was built in the 18th century and which is situated in Damrûâ Khammarah.

Approximately 300 metres north of the limit of the village of Damrûâ Khammarah, there is the Muslim cemetery situated on a slight elevation (kôm). One hundred metres north of the cemetery are the remains of a burnt brick building, which is identified with *kôm al-hammâm,* and this site supposedly belonged to the Christians. The area in question, which occupies 6.50 m. by 10 m. is enclosed by a wall of burnt bricks of 80 cm. thickness and projects 50 cm. from the ground. The village elders knew of altogether four baths, which were supplied with water from a nearby well, which is now covered. This may have been the bathing place, which is referred to in the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Chuch* (1).

It appears that by the 12th or 13th century the population of Damrûâ had become Islamic and little is remembered of the time when Damrûâ served as the patriarchal residence.

The last patriarch whom we know resided in the Nile Delta was Macarius II, the 69th Patriarch of Alexandria (1102-1128). In the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* it is recorded, that the « saintly father Abba Macarius, the patriarch, was absent in his cell which was at Azarî on the Island of Bani Nasr » (2). The first reference to the cell of Azarî is found in the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church.* In the *vita* of Christodoulus, the 68th Patriarch of Alexandria (1047-1077), we are informed

(1) *HPEC,* II, ii, p. 170.
(2) *HPEC,* II, iii, p. 372.

that a Syrian priest called Samuel had become a saintly anchorite in a hermitage in the Rîf called Azra (Azarî) (1).

After the death of Cyril II (1092), Samuel was considered as a candidate for the patriarchal throne, and the electors had already proceeded to Azarî when, on their way, they were informed that Samuel was a man of unsound doctrine (2). Regarding the identity of the cell of Azarî, H.E. White suggests that the « cell of Adari, to which Samuel the Hermit belonged, is perhaps the Syrian Monastery itself» (3). However, we are explicitly told, that Azarî was situated on the Island of Bani Nasr.

Amélineau states that the Island of «Benou-Nasr» was situated in the lower part of Menuf, since Abiar is nowadays part of the Province of Gharbiya (4). The map « La Basse-Egypte d'après Le Cadastre el Naciri au VIIIème siècle de l'Hégire, XIVème siècle A.P. J.C.» by Omar Toussoun (5) shows the Gaziret Ibiar and Bani Nasr enclosed in the west by the Damietta branch of the Nile and in the east by the al-Baguriya Canal, extending from the north of Ashmûn, Menufiyah to Basyûn, Gharbiya. Al-Adarî, the form given to the name of the village by *M.S.* 302 Fonds arabe, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (6) is marked as situated between al-Dalgamûn (north) and Ichwâ al-Hissa (south).

Until 1947, the site of the cell was known as al-'Adâwi, (7) and, for that matter, the village signs at the entrances

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(1) *HPEC*, II, iii, p. 319.

(2) This Samuel is probably the Samuel ben Cyriacus, described as a monk and stylite, who wrote several MSS which are preserved in the library of the Dair al-Surîân. His name appears first in 1081. when he was in the Monastery of the Theotokos in Gazarta, near Alexandria, and is last mentioned in 1102 as a priest and stylite at Nikiu, not far from the desert of Scetis. Evelyn White, H., *The Monasteries of the Wâdî 'n-Natrûn*. New York, 1932, vol. II, p. 317.

(3) Evelyn White, *op. cit.*, II, p. 363.

(4) Amélineau, E., *op. cit.*, p. 283.

(5) Toussoun, Omar, *La Géographie de l'Egypte à l'Epoque Arabe*. Cairo, 1926, vol. I, i.

(6) Evelyn White, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

(7) Atlas of the Normal 1:100,000 Scale. Topographical series of Egypt, Giza, 1929, Map XII.

of the village still read al-'Adâwi» (1). Since 1947, however, the date of the construction of the «new mosque», known as the Sabrî Pasha al-Kurdî Mosque, the village became known as Minshât al-Kurdî. According to the information received from the village elders, there are absolutely no Christians living in the village, moreover, there are no remains of churches or memories of the village as a Christian site of importance.

The village of Azra, Azarî, Adarî, al-Adawî or Minshât al-Kurdî is situated 6 km. south of Kafr al-Zaiyât, between al-Dalgamûn and Abû Gharr on the western bank of the 'Imeisha Canal, which runs parallel to the al-Baguriya Canal.

From the 12th century onwards, Cairo became the permanent residence of the Coptic patriarchs, though it is reported, that John V, the 72nd Patriarch of Alexandria (1147-1166) stayed sometimes in the Rîf (2).

It is not surprising, that neither archaeological nor architectural remains of the patriarchal cells in the Nile Delta have survived. The annual innundation of the Nile, the repeated devastations of villages and cities in the Nile Delta and the heavy concentration of Muslims in Lower Egypt, all these factors may have led to the very rapid destruction of Christian churches, which, it should be remembered, were built largely of mud bricks.

2. — THE FORMER BISHOPRIC OF SINGAR

For the Coptic churchman the name Singâr will certainly suggest the special hymn tune which goes under this name. It is used for the psalm preceding the Gospel from Easter Sunday to the Eve of Ascension Day. « Alleluia, Alleluia, Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, rose from the dead on the third day : Alleluia, Alleluia » (3). This tune is already men-

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(1) The village signs appear on the agricultural road from Qasr Nasr al-Din to al-'Adâwi, and from Abû al-Gharr to al-'Adâwi.

(2) *HPEC*, III, I, p. 69.

(3) *The Book of the Service of the Deacon*. Cairo, 1951, p. 376.

tioned by Abû'l-Barakât in chapter XVI of his *Lamp of the Darkness and the Elucidation of the Service,* where it is referred to as the third tune, corresponding to the Tritos of the Greek Church (1).

Singâr (2), however, is also the name of an important Christian centre, especially from the 11th to the 13th century, when it was an episcopal see. Singâr is first mentioned in the *Coptic Synaxarium* (3) where, for the 4th of Misrâ (August 10th) we read of David and his brothers, natives of Singâr in Lower Egypt who suffered martyrdom during the persecution of Diocletian (284-305 A.D.). At the time of the compilation of the *Coptic Synaxarium* (4) David's body was still preserved in the Monastery of St. Victor near Asyût (5). By the 8th century, Singâr, the Coptic Scinsciori (6) had become an episcopal see for, at the time of Marwân II (744-750 A.D.), there was a certain Abba Ya'qûb who «was also counted worthy of the bishopric of Singâr» (7). He was imprisoned with Khâîl I, 46th Patriarch of Alexandria, and other bishops. What may have happened to Singâr from the 8th to the 9th century we do not know

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(1) Villecourt, Louis, « Les observances liturgiques et la discipline du jeûne dans l'Eglise Copte, » *Le Muséon,* XXXVI, 1923, pp. 263-264. Vansleb, M., *Histoire de l'Eglise d'Alexandrie*. Paris, 1677. vol. II, ch. X, p. 58.

(2) The town of Singâr in Lower Egypt should not be confused with Singâr or Singâra on the Nahr Tharthar, which is situated on the road from Dair to Mosul, and approximately one hundred kilometres west of the latter place. This Singâr was a strong border fortress of the Romans, and beneath its walls there was fought a memorable battle between Constantius and Sapor. It was stormed by the Persians during the reign of the Emperor Julian.

(3) Basse, R. « Le Synaxaire Arabe Jacobite », *Patr. Orient.*, XVII, p. 705.

(4) The 12th-13th century. Cf. Burmester, O. H. E., KHS-, « On the Date and Authorship of the Arabic Synaxarium of the Coptic Church, » *JTS*, XXXIX, 1938, pp. 249-253. Graf, « Zur Autorschaft des Arabischen Synaxars der Kopten, » *Orientalia,* TX, 1940, 3, pp. 240-243.

(5) This would be the Monastery of St. Victor at Shû, about 5 km. from Abnûb, on the east bank of the Nile, opposite to Asyût.

(6) Vansleb, M., *op. cit.*, p. 24.

(7) HPCC, *Patr. Orient.*, V. fasc. 1, p. 180. Muyser, J., « Contribution à l'Etude des Listes Episcopales de l'Eglise Copte, » *BSAC*, X, 1944, p. 148.

except that the town would certainly have suffered from the same oppressions as the other towns of Lower Egypt.

At the time of the patriarchate of Christodoulus (1047-1077) the town of Singâr had increased in importance, partly on account of the monks of Singâr, and partly on account of the relics of St. Philotheus (Fîlûtâûs) (1) and St. Thecla (Taklah) the Apostolic (2) which had been transferred from the hermitage of Nafûh at Nastarûh (3) to the hermitage of Singâr (4).

In 1086-1087, George ibn Madkûr, the chronicler of the History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church, visited Singâr, where he was blessed by Michael (Mîkhâyîl), the hegoumenos of the hermitage of Singâr and the above mentioned relics (5). A few years later, Yûhannâ ibn Sa'îd al-Qulzumî established an inventory of the relics of Egypt, among which he also included those of St. Philotheus and St. Thecla at Singâr (6).

During the middle of the 11th century, the hermitage at Singâr gained importance on account of its monks, whose names appear in the History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church. Peter of Singâr was known for many miracles which he wrought, among which that his finger was dyed from the holy chalice when, while celebrating in the Church of Damrûâ (7), he placed his finger on the rim of the chalice, and the chalice flooded so that it filled to its edge and his finger was dyed (8). Other priests of Singâr whose names

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(1) Basset, R., « Le Synaxaire Arabe Jacobite. » *Patr. Orient.*, XI, pp. 567-570.

(2) James, M. R., *The Apocryphal New Testament*. Oxford, 1924, pp. 277-279.

(3) Probably the Province Nastarawah, cf. Amélineau, E., *La Géographie de l'Egypte à l'Epoque Copte*. Paris, 1893, p. 275.

(4) *HPEC*, II, iii, p. 247.

(5) *HPEC*, II, iii, p. 297.

(6) *HPEC*, II, iii, p. 359.

(7) Meinardus, O., « Damrûâ : Past and Present. » *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Egypte*. XXXVIII, 1965, pp. 195-199.

(8) *HPEC*, II, iii, p. 297.

are recorded are Yustus al-Singârî, the priest of the Church of St. Mercurius in Old Cairo (1) and Kîyîl al-Singâri of the Church of the Holy Virgin at al-Gudaîyidah (2).

At the time of Cyril II (1078-1092), the 67th Patriarch of Alexandria, we have another reference to Singâr as an episcopal see, for Theodore (Tâûdrus), Bishop of Singâr was among the forty-seven bishops who participated in the episcopal council in Cairo in 1086 (3). After the death of Cyril II, Abû Ghâlib Bîmin ibn Tîdur ibn Makûrah, the deacon of Singâr, had joined the bishops and the Alexandrians in their deliberations for the choice of a successor of Cyril II (4), and it is noteworthy that their choice fell on Michael, the anchorite and hegoumenos of the hermitage at Singâr, who was learned, virtuous and had read and understood the Holy Scriptures. Then the electors journeyed all together to Singâr (5), and Michael (1092-1102) became the 68th Patriarch of Alexandria (6). There is no doubt that the bishopric of Singâr continued to exist until the 13th century, for during the patriarchate of Cyril III Ibn Laqlaq (1235-1243), 75th Patriarch of Alexandria, Mark, Bishop of Singâr had joined the other bishops in their accusations against Cyril III (7) and Butrus, Bishop of Singâr, was present in the ceremony of the concoction of the Holy Chrism (myron) in 1257) (8).

One of the last references to Singâr is the mention of the place by the Arab historian and geographer Abû'l-Fidâ' Isma'il ibn 'Alî 'Imad al-Dîn (1273-1331), who is quoted by

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(1) *Cf. infra.*

(2) *HPEC*, II, iii, p. 297.

(3) HPEC, II, iii, p. 335. Renaudotius, *Hist. Patr. Alex.*, Paris, 1713, p. 458. Quatremère, M., *Mémoires Géographiques et Historiques sur l'Egypte*. Paris, 1811, I, p. 280.

(4) *HPEC*, II, iii, p. 372.

(5) *HPEC*, II, iii, pp. 381, 384.

(6) Evetts, B.T.A., *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*. Oxford, 1895, fols. 38a, 80a.

(7) Renaudotius, *op. cit.*, p. 590.

(8) Munier, H., *Recueil des Listes Episcopales de l'Eglise Copte*. Cairo, 1943, p. 35.

Qalqasandi (d. 1418) (1). Moreover, the List of Episcopal Sees of the Coptic Manuscript 53 of the John Rylands Library (14th century) still mentions Singâr (2).

In all probability, Singâr as an inhabited site disappeared on account of the rising water level of Lake Burullos some time in the 16th or 17th century, for the 17th and 18th century maps of Egypt show the Lake Burullos in almost its present extent with a few islands, yet without any reference to Singâr (3). Whereas in the 11th century, the bishops and the Alexandrians could still travel on foot to Singâr in order to elect their patriarch, five hundred years later, this would have been impossible (4).

Today the ruins of Singâr are situated in the north-western part of the Island of Singâr (Gazîrat Singâr) in Lake Burullos, 18 km. south-west of Burg al-Burullos. By taking a faluca, one sails on the shallow Lake Burullos from Burg al-Burullos between Gazîrat al-'Azâwîah and Gazîrat al-Maqâlî (al-'Agawî) to Gazîrat al-Sisa al-'Agûzah and Gazîrat Singâr. The island, which is uninhabited, has a length of approximately 700 m., and a width varying from 200 m. to 400 m. Parts of the southern and eastern section of the island are covered with grass. In the spring, peasants from the mainland bring by boat young animals, which they leave to feed on the island until they are ready for sale or slaughter, when they are brought back to the mainland.

The north-western part of the island, known also as *kûm al-ahmar,* extends over an area of 190 × 120 m., and is covered with a thick layer of broken pottery, burnt bricks,

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(1) Maspero, J. and Wiet, G., *Matériaux pour servir à la Géographie de l'Egypte.* Première série, Cairo, 1914, p. 211.

(2) Munier, H., *op. cit.*, pp. 53, 63.

(3) Michalet, *Les Déserts d'Egypte, de Thébaïde, d'Arabie* (1693); Schenk, *Aegypti Recentior descriptio, etc.* (ca 1700) ; Lotter, *Le cours entier du grand et fameux Nil* (ca. 1702); De Vaugondy, *Carte de l'Eglise Ancienne et Moderne* (1753); Bonne, *Carte de l'Eglise Ancienne et Moderne* (1762); D'Anville, *Egypt called in the Country of Missir* (1765).

(4) For a study on the geomorphology of the region under discussion, cf. Said, R., « Remarks on the Geomorphology of the Deltaic Coastal Plain between Rosetta and Port Said, » *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Egypte,* XXXI, 1958, pp. 115-125.

broken glass, broken green ceramics and oxidized coins. A considerable part of the ancient Singâr is submerged as can be seen by the broken pottery and ruins which extend far into the lake. With the rising of the water-level, it is likely that in the future more and more of the island will eventually disappear beneath the waters of Lake Burullos.

3. — THE PRINCIPAL TOWNS OF THE NILE DELTA

Damanhûr

Damanhûr, the ancient Egyptian Time-an-Hor or the Roman Hermopolis Parva, is an important cotton centre. There is little of interest in the town. The present town was founded in the middle of the 19th century. The Coptic Orthodox Church has two churches, the Church of the Archangel (1848) and the Church of St. George (1948). The Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to SS. Constantine and Helena. The Catholic Church is dedicated to the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Moreover, there is a Coptic Evangelical Church in Damanhûr.

In 1957, Abûnâ Bûlus Bûlus established the first Coptic social centre in Damanhûr (rural diakonia), thereby initiating a movement that was to spread throughout the Delta and the Valley of the Nile.

Damietta

Damietta, the Thamiatis of the Romans, the Tamiati of the Copts and the Dimyât of the Arabs, is situated on the east bank of the Phatnitic branch of the Nile.

During the Ptolemaic period, a seaport of considerable size must have existed here. The old town probably was situated nearer to the sea than the modern town. In the Middle Ages, the town was a trading centre for a certain linen which was called « dimity », oil, coffee, dates, fish, etc. The town was attacked in 1169 by the King of Jerusalem, who set up siege towers, but Salâh al-Dîn defended the town so successfully that the Invaders were obliged to return to Palestine. In 1218 the

town was besieged by King John of Jerusalem, and after a fight of twenty-five hours, Germans and Frisians succeeded in capturing the town. The success of the Christians was, however, marred by the interference of Pelagius Galvani, the papal legate and by the vigilance of Sultan Malik al-Kâmil. Following the capture, the mosques were converted into churches, but in 1221, the Christians were compelled, by a treaty, to evacuate the town. In 1249 Louis IX landed at Damietta, the garrison fled, and the French king occupied the town without striking a blow. But in the course of the following year the Crusaders were obliged to restore it to the Arabs as part of the ransom of Louis IX, who had been taken prisoner at Mansûra. During the same year, by a resolution of the Emirs, the town was destroyed, and was rebuilt on the east bank of the river. The French took possession of Damietta.

The Coptic Orthodox Church in Damietta is dedicated to the Holy Virgin. The Catholics maintain the Church of St. Francis of Assisi. The Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to St. Nicholas.

On December 19, 1969, the Franciscan Fathers assembled in great numbers in Damietta in order to commemorate the seven hundred and fiftieth anniversary of St. Francis' arrival in Damietta. The memorial service was held in the old Greek Catholic Church (now Coptic Orthodox) in the presence of the governor of Damietta, the principal shaikhs and the orthodox priests of the city. After the service, the Franciscan Fathers proceeded to the old mosque of Damietta, where Father Joseph Cisternino, o.f.m. preached the sermon which was followed by the Lord's Prayer in Latin.

Mansûra

Mansûra, the «City of Victory» is a thriving town largely on account of its cotton industry. Mansûra was founded by Sultan Malik al-Kâmil in 1221 as an advantageous substitute for Damietta. The town is situated on the east bank of the Damietta branch of the Nile, which is here both broad and deep.

Mansûra was attacked by the Crusaders under Louis IX in 1249. After great difficulties the Crusaders succeeded in crossing the Ashmun Canal, but in the neighbourhood of Mansûra they were defeated by the young Sultan al-Mu'azzam Turanshah. The fleet of the Crusaders was destroyed. When the Crusaders attempted to escape, they were intercepted by the Mamluks, and Robert, Count of Artois, and 300 of his men, and nearly all the Templars, were slain. The king was captured, and a year later released on payment of a ransom of 10,000,000 francs and on surrendering Damietta.

There are five Coptic Orthodox Churches in Mansûra : The Church of the Archangel, the Church of St. George, the Church of SS. Paul and Antony, the Church of the Holy Virgin and the Church of St. Dimiana. The Greek Orthodox churches are dedicated to SS. Athanasius and Cyril and St. Nicholas. The Catholics have three churches, a Greek Catholic Church, a Maronite Church and a Coptic Catholic Church. There is also a Coptic Evangelical Church.

Mahallah al-Kubra

With the beginning of the spinning and weaving industry in 1927, Mahallah al-Kubra has rapidly become one of the largest Egyptian towns. There are three Coptic Orthodox Churches dedicated to St. Mary, St. George and St. Dimiana. The Catholics have the Church of St. Augustine and there is also one Coptic Evangelical Church. The Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to St. George.

Menûf

Menûf, the Momenphis of the Greeks, is an ancient town. The Coptic Orthodox Church of St. George was built in 1890. The Episcopal Church of Egypt maintains a school and a church in Menûf.

Shibîn al-Kom

Shibîn al-Kom is a small town near Menûf, but it is the See of a Coptic bishop. There is the Coptic Orthodox Church

of the Holy Virgin (1800) and the Church of St. George (1907). The Catholics have a church which is dedicated to St. John the Baptist. There is also a Coptic Evangelical Church at Shibîn al-Kom. The Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to St. Spyridon.

Sinbillâwein

Near Sinbillâwein, which is on the main line from Zaqaziq to Mansûra, is the mound which the Arabs call Tamai al-Amdid, and which marks the site of the classical Thmuis. There is the Coptic Church of the Holy Virgin in Sinbillâwein. The Coptic Evangelical congregation meets in an appartment.

Tanta

The capital of the large province of Gharbiya, Tanta is a great commercial, social and Islamic centre. It is the See of the Coptic Orthodox bishop as well as that of a Greek Orthodox bishop. There are five Coptic Orthodox Churches ; one dedicated to the Holy Virgin (1873), two dedicated to St. George, one dedicated to Archangel Michael and one dedicated to St. Menas. The Greek Orthodox Churches are dedicated to the Presentation of Our Lord, St. George and the Dormition of the Holy Virgin. The Catholics have three churches : the Church of St. Anne, a Greek Catholic Church and a Coptic Catholic Church. There are two Coptic Evangelical Churches in Tanta. The American Mission maintains the American Hospital in Tanta.

Zaqaziq

Zaqaziq, the capital of the Province of Sharqiya is one of the chief centres of the Egyptian cotton and grain trade. At one time, many European merchants had their offices in Zaqaziq. Zaqaziq is the See of a Coptic Orthodox bishop. The Coptic Orthodox Churches are : The Church of St. George, the Church of St. Takla Haymanot, which is the only

church in Egypt dedicated to an Ethiopian saint, and which was constructed in 1848. Then there are the Churches of St. Bishoi (1898) and that of the Archangel (1942). The Armenian Orthodox Church has the Church of the Holy Cross, and the Greek Orthodox Churches are dedicated to the Three Hierarchs, the Dormition of the Holy Virgin. The Catholics have the Church of St. Joseph. There is also a Coptic Evangelical Church of Zaqaziq.

4. — THE COPTIC PILGRIMAGE SHRINES IN THE NILE DELTA

The Shrine of St. Dimiana

The Shrine of St. Dimiana or the Dair Sitt Dimîâna in the Nile Delta used to belong to the diocese of the Metropolitan of Jerusalem, and has been served from time immemorial by monks from the Monastery of St. Antony. Since 1970, the Shrine of St. Dimiana has been incorporated into the newly formed diocese of Damietta. Moreover, instead of monks administering the Shrine, the dair has become a convent, inhabited by seven nuns under the leadership of the Abbess Dimiana or Sitt Dimiana.

To reach this shrine, one proceeds from Cairo to Mansûra (133 km.) and from Mansûra one travels along a rough agricultural road for 22 km. in a northerly direction to the town of Bilqâs. After passing through Bilqâs, one turns east on the main road to Shirbîn. After two kilometres, another rough agricultural road leads north to Dair Sitt Dimiana. The dair appears like a large farm or estate, and has an outer and an inner court. The southern buildings enclose four churches, while the northern and the western buildings are used to accommodate the numerous pilgrims. At one time, these many rooms served as cells for the monks.

The four churches of the dair are : The First Church of St. Dimiana, the Second Church of St. Dimiana, the Third

Church of St. Dimiana and the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

According to tradition, the initial development of the dair began with the building of the tomb of St. Dimiana and her Forty Virgins by St. Helena, the mother of St. Constantine.

The First Church in commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Dimiana was built by Abba John, the 29th Patriarch of Alexandria.

> This church, however, was destroyed when the floods of the sea covered the whole land. The tomb of St. Dimiana and her Forty Virgins remained under water for seventy years. Then the Christians began to pray asking God to withdraw the waters from their holy shrine, and the waters receded. When Abba John II (the successor to John I) camped near the original estate of the Saint, he had a dream. St. Dimiana appeared to him and ordered him to build a church, and the patriarch obeyed her and built a church in her honour. This then is the first Church of St. Dimiana, which is situated in the south-western part of the dair. There is no doubt whatsoever that this building constitutes the most ancient part of the whole dair. The church is a long and narrow building filled with debris and rubbish, so that it is impossible to estimate even its original height. The stone screens divide the church into three separate parts which Abûnâ Mînâ identified as the Angels' choir, the Saints' choir and the Martyrs' choir. All that is visible now is a prayer niche in the eastern part of the church. The church has been, and obviously still is used, as a stable or a rubbish heap.

The Second Church of St. Dimiana known as the « Old Church », was built in the latter part of the 19th century by Anbâ Yûhannis, Metropolitan of Burullos.

> One reaches the church through the inner court of the dair. Apart from the wooden screen, the church is uninteresting. It has one haikal, which is dedicated to St. Dimiana. The haikal-screen bears the date of 1845 A.D. and, therefore, antedates the building of the church. North of the sanctuary there is a prayer chamber for men, with icons and pictures of St. Dimiana, St. George and the Blessed Virgin Mary. In front of the prayer

chamber there is a candelabrum with an icon of St. Dimiana and her Forty Virgins attached to it. South of the sanctuary there is the prayer chamber for women which has no decoration whatsoever.

In the western part of the church there is the tomb of St. Dimiana. Three steps lead up to the tomb which is enclosed by a wooden screen.

Twenty-five little oval-shaped windows in the screen enable the pilgrims to view the shrine. The screen, which encloses the tomb, was built by Galîl Ibrâhîm, the carpenter of Bilqâs in 1887. Small rags and pieces torn from handkerchiefs are attached to the screen by pious pilgrims as votive offerings. The wooden cross which stands three feet west of the tomb bears the following inscription : « The great martyr, the Virgin Dimîâna, 1879, made at the home of Anbâ Basîlîûs ».

The Third Church of St. Dimiana which is in the outer court of the dair is a very recent construction.

The church was built in 1932 by Anbâ Bûtrûs, Bishop of Mansûra, and was completed by Anbâ Timutâûs. Its dimensions are 40 metres by 20 metres. The church has only one haikal. Above the stone screen there is a modern icon of the Mystical Supper, on both sides of which there are icons of six apostles and two large icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Christ.

The Fourth Church of the dair is situated on the first floor of the south wing of the inner court. It is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The date of its construction is 1879. The green painted wooden haikal-screen is anything but aesthetic, and there are no signs that the church has been used in recent times.

Wansleben visited the shrine in 1672. Fr. C. Sicard, S. J., travelled in May 1714 via Mansûra and Bilqâs to the Dair of « Sainte-Gemianne », where he saw a church with twenty-two domes. Sir Gardner Wilkinson (1843), mentions this dair and the fair associated with it. The first Protestant missionaries to attend a pilgrimage to the Dair Sitt Dimîâna were Dr. McCague and Mr. Awad Hannâ (1860). In May, 1863, during one of the annual pilgrimages, the Reverend Gulian Lansing of the United

Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. visited Dair Sitt Dimîâna which was famous for the visions of celestial riders that could be seen within its door. In 1903, the monastery was visited by Fr. M. Jullien, S. J. In April 1913, Elie Sidawy visited the Shrine of St. Dimiana, and reported his impressions in a significant study of the origin of the celebrations connected with the Saint.

THE MULID

A full and rather interesting report of the celebrations in honour of Sitt Dimiana is also presented by Leeder. « The moolid is still attended every year, between May 5 and May 20, by some 4,000 to 6,000 pilgrims coming from all parts of Egypt. They usually pitch a tent round the monastery, and live there for a period of not less than eight and not more than fifteen days, ending with the actual day of the celebrations. Numbers of merchants usually go and hold bazaars, in which they sell food, drink, sometimes clothing, ornaments, perfumes, rings, handkerchiefs, sticks, etc., and especially wooden and brass crosses imported from Jerusalem. They refer to Sitt Dimîâna for the ability to give fruitfulness to women, or long life to the children of a woman who has lost many in infancy. Therefore, many gifts of money, jewels, gold and silver are presented to her church ».

The pilgrimage takes place annually on the date on which the church was dedicated by St. Helena, May 21, and on the day of the martyrdom of St. Dimiana on January 20.

St. DIMIANA

Marcus was a Christian governor who lived in the middle of the 3rd century. He had only one child, Dimiana. When the girl grew up, her father chose for her a nobleman. But Dimiana refused to marry, for she had been taught the Christian virtue of virginity. « If you really care for me », she told her father, « build me a castle where I can live and preserve my virginity and serve my Christ ». And her father built her a large palace covering an area of 15 feddans. Soon the daughters of the other noblemen followed the example of Dimiana, and she and the forty virgins served the Lord.

One day, Diocletian summoned all the noblemen from Egypt, demanding from them to worship the Roman

gods. Those who refused to worship the gods were persecuted. Marcus, the father of St. Dimiana, had decided to give up his Christian faith. But when he returned to Egypt his daughter said : « Either you become a Christian again, or I refuse to be called your daughter ». Marcus went back to Diocletian and made a Christian confession and the king ordered Marcus to be killed. When the king discovered that Dimiana had inspired her father to change his religion, he sent a statue of himself to Dimiana's castle, demanding from her and her virgins to worship it. She and her forty virgins refused, and consequently they were tortured and killed.

The Churches of St. George at Mît Damsîs

The two Churches of St. George at Mît Damsîs are well-known throughout Lower Egypt on account of the annual mûlid which is held there from August 22 to 28. Several thousand pilgrims, including many patients suffering from various ailments, visit the ancient Church of St. George, expecting to be cured by St. George from their afflictions.

The Churches of St. George are situated on the eastern bank of the Damietta branch of the Nile, approximately 20 km. north of Mît Ghamr.

One enters the new Church of St. George (built about 1880) through a church-yard which is enclosed on three sides by hostels for pilgrims. The new Church of St. George is situated at the eastern end of the court. Above the entrance of the church there is a large circular mosaic of St. George (1961). The new church has three haikals which are dedicated to St. Michael (north), St. George (centre) and the Holy Virgin (south). The icons on the iconostasis represent from north to south : St. Shenute, St. Rifkah (Rebecca), St. George, the Holy Virgin, Christ, St. Mark, St. Dimiana, SS. Helena and Constantine and St. Antony. The miraculous icon of St. George is attached to the north wall of the nave. The baptistery is situated in a separate building to the south of the church.

Lit. : Sidawy, E., « Sitti Dimiânâ, sa légende, son moulid, » *Bull. Soc. Roy. Géogr. d'Egypte*, VIII, 79-99.
Leeder, S.H., *Modern Sons of the Pharaohs*, London, 1918, p. 136.

The ancient Church of St. George is reached by turning to the right, after entering the church yard. One proceeds a few steps down and enters the large nave of the Church of St. George from the north. Here, several hundred pilgrims assemble during the time of the mûlid in the expectation to be healed by St. George. The ancient church, which according to local tradition was built by St. Helena, has three haikals which are also dedicated to St. Michael (north), St. George (centre), and the Holy Virgin (south). South of the haikal of the Holy Virgin are the tombs of several priests. This room, however, is presently used as a storage place for chairs and other furniture. The haikal-screen is inlaid with ivory, and an icon of Christ (1900 A.D.) is attached to the central haikal. The miraculous icon of St. George adorns the northern wall of the nave of the ancient church.

In the immediate proximity of the churches to the north is the new Mosque of Muhammad Abû Bakr.

The Church of Sitt Rifkah (St. Rebecca) at Sunbât

The Church of Sitt Rifkah in Sunbât near Mît Damsîs is the site of a prominent annual mûlid in honour of Sitt Rifkah and the thirteen martyrs (September 17), who died with her during the Diocletian persecution.

Sunbât, a small village on the western bank to the Damietta branch of the Nile, can be conveniently reached from Mît Damsîs by feluca (2 km.) in southerly direction and then by donkey for 2.5 km. in westerly direction. The church is situated in the western part of the village of Sunbât, next to the village school. One enters the church through a spacious church yard. The church has two haikals which are dedicated to the Holy Virgin and St. Rebecca. The

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Lit. : Labib, F., « Spirit of Mit Damsis, » *Al-Mussawar*, Sept. 5, 1958.
Labib, F., « Mari Girgis kills the Evil Spirit, » *Al-Mussawar*, Sept. 4, 1959.
Meinardus, O., « Some Theological and Sociological Aspects of the Coptic Mulid, » *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte*, XLIV (1962-63).
Sidawy, E., « Le Mouled d'Abou-Guerg, » *Revue du Monde Egyptien*, I (1921), 146-152, 225-234.

southern room (at one time an altar-room) contains the relics of St. Rebecca and thirteen martyrs.

Rebecca and her children Agathon, Amon, Peter, Simeon, Isaac, Thomas, Andrew, John (there is no unanimity about the names of the other martyrs) were natives of Upper Egypt (province of Qûs), Agathon being the prefect of Qus. Christ appeared to them and revealed that they would suffer martyrdom near Alexandria, and that their bodies would be carried to Lower Egypt. Rejoicing at this, they publicly confessed their faith before Dionysius, the governor, and being tortured they did not recant. Then they were sent to Alexandria, where they were questioned by Arianus the governor, finally, after suffering torture, they were martyred. Their relics were translated to Sunbât in the 13th century.

Daqadûs near Mît Ghamr

One of the largest mawâlid in the Nile Delta is celebrated annually on the 22nd of August in the Church of the Holy Virgin in the village of Daqadûs, about 3 km. north of Mît Ghamr on the east bank of the Damietta branch of the Nile. According to an early mediaeval Coptic tradition, the Holy Family is said to have stopped there on the Flight into Egypt.

Literary evidence testifies to a Church of the Holy Virgin in Daqadûs, which existed in 626 A.H. or 1239 A.D. The church library contains several ancient dated mss., among which there is a commentary on the doctrines of St. Paul by Abû'l Farag ibn al-'Assal dated 1048 A.M. or 1332 A.D. In the 12th century, Michael V, the 71st Patriarch of Alexandria, was born in Daqadûs. At that time the town was a dependency of the Coptic archbishopric of Jerusalem as is attested by numerous mss. in the church library. The name Daqadûs appears in ancient Coptic texts as ti theotokos athokotos, *i.e.* the Mother of God of Daqadûs. Athokotos is, of course, theotokos, which in its Arab form became Daqadûs.

The Church of the Holy Virgin at Musturud

The Church of the Holy Virgin (al-'Adhrâ) is situated in the village of Mustured, 3 km. west of al-Matariya. Those

travelling by car from Cairo to Ismailia and Port Said normally pass Musturud. The church lies on the left side of the road (coming from Cairo) and can be easily identified on account of the new bell-tower (1961). A few metres from the church is a mosque and the tomb of a shaikh.

The Church of the Holy Virgin is of interest, because it is built over a cave which is said to have given shelter to the Holy Family on their Flight to Egypt. Also within the church there is a well in which the Holy Virgin is said to have washed the Christchild.

The church is entered through a door in the north wall. Almost opposite the entrance there are stairs leading into the cave. Icons and candle-stands adorn the small sanctuary. Another staircase leads to the eastern part of the church and the well of the Holy Virgin. Close by is the baptismal font. The church has three haikals which are dedicated to St. John the Baptist (north), the Holy Virgin (centre) and St. George (south). On the southern wall are several icons which are noteworthy.

> The icon of the Holy Virgin on gazelle skin, an icon of St. Dimiana, the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, the Martyrdom of St. Peter and the Stoning of St. Stephen and the Resurrection of Lazarus.

An annual mûlid (August 7-22) is celebrated at the church in honour of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin.

5. THE FORMER BISHOPRIC OF TERENUTHIS

In his article « The earliest Christian Inscriptions of Egypt», Hans Petersen has convincingly demonstrated that the part of the necropolis of Terenuthis, which was excavated by the University of Michigan, included both pre-Christian and Christian stelae. The coins, which were discovered, date the burials to the first half of the 4th century A.D. and more specifically to the reigns of Constantine I and Constantius (1). Moreover, by comparing the *orantes* on the early

(1) Petersen, H., *Classical Philology*, LIX, 3, 1964, p. 164.

Christian monuments of Rome with those of the stelae of Kôm Abû Billo, Petersen has pointed out some very definite similarities. «It is more than likely that the orantes of the Roman catacombs are related to those of Kom Abu Billo» (1). This means that we have archaeological evidence that by the first half of the fourth century, Christianity had penetrated into the Nile Delta. It is understandable that so strategically situated a town as Terenuthis would have accepted the New Faith more readily than some of the more remote and isolated villages and towns. The *Coptic Synaxarium* commemorates on the 27th of Abîb a certain Abamûn, , native of Terenuthis, who, desiring the crown of martyrdom, went before Arianus the Governor, and made his profession of faith. He was tortured and finally executed (2). This incident confirms that by the latter part of the 3rd century, some of the residents of Terenuthis were Christians. This fact is also attested by the *Acts of the Martyrs,* in which we read of Apater, the son of Basilides, who together with his sister Eirene, fled from Alexandria and went to Terenuthis, where they crossed the river to proceed to Babylon (3). Apparently, Terenuthis was a safe place for Christians to flee to. Certainly, during the following centuries, the town gained a reputation as a haven for Christian refugees.

By the 4th century, the ancient commercial relations between the Wâdî al-Natrûn and Terenuthis were enriched by the traffic between the Desert Fathers of Scetis (4) and the Nile Delta. For that matter, the foundation of St. Macarius was situated only 55 km. from Terenuthis, which was the

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(1) Petersen, *op. cit.*, p. 166. The fact that the early Christian monuments of Rome show the *orantes* in frontal view rather than in profile, and that the frontal view is also found among the *orantes* of Kom Abu Billo, had led Petersen to conclude that the Christian art of Rome influenced some of the funerary stelae of Kom Abu Billo. Cf. Bonner, Campbell, « The Ship of the Soul on a Group of Grave-Stelae from Terenuthis. » *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, LXXXV, 1, 1941, pp. 84-91.

(2) Basset, R., « Le Synaxaire Arabe Jacobite. » *Patr. Orient.*, XVII, pp. 692-693.

(3) Hyvernat, H., *Les Actes des Martyrs de l'Egypte*, Paris, 1886, pp. 91 and 99.

(4) Evelyn White, H. G., *The Monasteries of the Wâdî 'n-Natrûn*. New York, 1932. Vol. II, pp. 141 ff.

nearest point in the Delta. In the *Paradise of the Fathers*, Palladius records that on one occasion St. Macarius the Egyptian went from Scetis to Therenuthum, and at eventide he came upon a certain place where there were some old bones and bodies of the dead, where he rested (1) Tempted by the devils which dwelt there, St. Macarius overcame them all, so that they fled away ashamed (2). As a commercial centre, Terenuthis also became the market-town for the monks of the Desert of Scetis, and the *Apophthegmata Patrum* relate that St. Macarius used to go there to sell the palmleaf baskets, which he had made (3).

During the 5th century, the monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn were sacked by the Mazices, who advanced from the southerly oases of Farâfra and Bahria, and many of the monks escaped from the desert to Terenuthis (4), among whom were the famous monks Pœmen and Anûb with their brothers (5). No doubt, Terenuthis provided a welcome place of protection, especially since, already in the latter part of the 4th century, the town had advanced to an episcopal see. Among the seven Egyptian bishops who revolted against the violence of Theophilus, the 23rd Patriarch of Alexandria (384-412 A.D.), there is listed John of Ternoutheos (6), and the Paschal Epistle of Theophilus of the year 404 A.D. mentions « in Terenuthide Arsinthium » (7). When in 431 A.D. two hundred bishops assembled for the 3rd Oecumenical Council of Ephesus, the episcopal see of Terenuthis was represented by its bishop Eulogius (8). Unfortunately, there are hardly any architectural remains of the Byzantine

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(1) Probably a reference to the necropolis of Kôm Abû Billo.

(2) Budge, E. A. W., *The Paradise or Garden of the Holy Fathers*. London, 1907, Vol. II, p. 197.

(3) *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Macarius Aegyptius, XIII.

(4) Butler, Dom Cuthbert, *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, Cambridge, 1904. Vol. II, p. 189.

(5) *Apophtegmata Patrum*, Anub, I.

(6) De vita et excilio Joannis Chrysostomi. Migne, *P.G.* XLVII. col. LIX, LXI. Munier, H., *Recueil des Listes Episcopales de l'Eglise Copte*. Cairo, 1943, p. 11. Ermoni, V., « *Les Evêchés de l'Eglise Chrétienne.* » *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, Paris, V, 1900. p. 640.

(7) *Dict. d'hist. et géogr. ecclés.* IV, col. 762. Munier, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

(8) Mansi, *Acta conciliorum*. IV, 1124. Munier, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Terenuthis. However, speaking about the Ptolemaic Temple at Kôm Abû Billo, B.V. Bothmer remarks that «several feet above the foundation of this wall is a tile pavement with small marble columns lying upon it. It is evident that we have here the site of successive churches, and the earliest of them was built of stone taken direct from the pagan temple, and built without any reworking. It is evident that the town grew very rapidly in height in the Coptic period» (1) Whether this church was the ancient cathedral or merely one of the numerous churches of Terenuthis is, of course, impossible to determine.

The geographical proximity to the desert monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn led the inhabitants to serve the monks. Thus, for example, we hear of a temporary *xenodochion,* which a certain Paisia established by transforming her house, which probably was situated at Terenuthis. Here, the monks were received and lodged when they came up from the desert (2). Was this perhaps the first monastic dependency at Terenuthis ?

In the 6th century, we hear of a further reference to Terenuthis as an established market-place for the products of the Desert Fathers. Abba Daniel, the famous ascete of Scetis and hegoumenos of the Monastery of St. Macarius (3), used to labour with his hands, and carried the baskets and mats made by him to Terenuthis for sale, and John Moschus (550-619 A.D.) (4), who visited Terenuthis, relates that here Abba Daniel was besought by a young man to pray that his wife might bear him a child. When a son was born to the couple, ill-natured persons alleged that Daniel was the real father (5). On account of its proximity to the desert, Terenuthis continued to serve as a place of refuge for the periodically persecuted and oppressed Desert Fathers. Thus,

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(1) Bothmer, B. V., « Ptolemaic Reliefs II : Temple Decorations of Ptolemy I Soter, » *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts,* Boston. L, 1952, 1952, pp. 51-52.

(2) Evelyn White, *op. cit.,* p. 187.

(3) Clugnet, L., *Vie et récits de l'Abbé Daniel le Scitiote.* Paris, 1901, p. 32, II, pp. 22 f.

(4) John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale.* Migne, *P.G.* CXIV.

(5) Abba Daniel is commemorated in the Coptic Church on the 8th of Bashons (May 16).

at the time of the fifth sack of the Wâdî al-Natrûn monasteries, between 570 and 573 A.D. which resulted in the complete destruction of the churches and monasteries of Scetis, the monks were scattered and several of them, among whom was Theodore of Alexandria, fled to Terenuthis (1).

At the time of the Arab Conquest, Terenuthis had considerably increased in strategic importance, which led the Romans to defend the town against the cavalry of the Arab forces of 'Amr ibn al-'As. It was only natural that such a town, which served as the regular crossing-place of the Nile on the way to Alexandria, and, at the same time, as point of departure for the Wâdî al-Natrûn, was not to be surrendered without resistance. And although the Romans suffered defeat, at least they saved their honour (2). Not very much later, the former battle-ground was transformed into a large welcoming stage, for we are informed that there went out from the Wâdî al-Natrûn seventy thousand monks, each one having a staff in his hand, and they went to Terenuthis to salute 'Amr ibn al-'As on his return from Alexandria and to implore his protection for them and for their monasteries (3).

After Isaac, the future patriarch (686-689 A.D.), had run away from his parental home in order to enter the desert, he sought refuge in Terenuthis, so as to avoid the searches of his parents, who were looking for him in the desert (4). By this time, Terenuthis, as an important episcopal see, a monastic centre, and a trading town, must have enjoyed prosperity and status. Peter, a bishop of Terenuthis (Tarnût) is mentioned as having participated in the deliberations of the Synod, which assembled in 743 A.D. for the election of Khâîl I, the 46th Patriarch of Alexandria (5), and during the patriarchate of John IV (777-799 A.D.),

(1) O'Leary, De Lacy, *The Saints of Egypt*. London, 1937, p. 122.

(2) Butler, Alfred, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*. Oxford, 1902, p. 283. Lane-Poole, Stanley, *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages*. London, 1925, p. 10.

(3) Quatremère, Et., *Mémoires Géographiques et Historiques sur l'Egypte*. Paris, 1811, vol. I, p. 464.

(4) Porcher, E., « Vie d'Isaac Patriarche d'Alexandrie de 686 à 689 », *Patr. Orient*. XI, pp. 314 and 386.

(5) HPCC, *Patr. Orient.*, V, pp. 106-107.

the relics of St. Macarius, which were stolen shortly after his death, were returned from the town of Elmi (?) to the Monastery of St. Macarius. At Terenuthis (Tarnût), the relics were taken off the ship and then carried into the desert (1).

According to the 10th century Arab geographer Ibn Hauqal (2), Terenuthis was situated on both banks of the Nile, and, in addition to a large mosque, the town had baths, well constructed markets, sugar mills and stores for grain and a large number of churches, which were ministered to by priests and monks. These buildings were, for the most part, constructed of brick, but by the 10th century, a great part of the city was in ruin. Terenuthis had experienced the fury of the Kitâma, a Berber tribe, who under the order of Abû'l-Qâsim, the eldest son of 'Ubaidullâh (934-946), had camped there. In the 10th century, Terenuthis was the residence of a governor, who had a regiment under his orders.

On more than one occasion, the destiny of the Christian community in Egypt was determined in Terenuthis. During the violent persecutions of the Fatimid Caliph al-Hâkim (996-1021), Zacharias, the 64th Patriarch of Alexandria (1004-1032), after having been set free by al-Hâkim, went to the monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn. At the same time, however, al-Hâkim commissioned an amîr from Misr (Cairo) and a group of workmen to go to the desert in order to demolish the churches and the desert monasteries. Yet, when they arrived at Tarnût (3), they changed their mind because of their fear of the Arabs (4). The monasteries and the churches remained unmolested. Another brief reference to the town of Tarnût as a Coptic episcopal see is found in the journal of the 11th century Arab traveller 'Abd

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(1) « The Ethiopian Synaxar, » *Patr. Orient.*, IX, pp. 355 ff.

(2) Ibn Hauqal is known for the geography written in 977, which is a revision and extension of the *Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik* of al-Istakhrî, who wrote in 951. Ed. De Goeje, M.J., Leiden, 1873, p. 90.

(3) Tarnût is the Arabic form of Terenuthis, a name that was used prior to that of Tarrâna.

(4) *HPEC*, II, ii, p. 200.

Allah ibn al-'Aziz 'Ubaid al-Bakhri (1). Al-Idrîsî, the 12th century Arab geographer just mentions the small village of Tarnût, which was fairly well populated, and where there was a great deal of commerce (2). By the 12th century, the new Arabic name of Tarrâna was well established. The town continued its prosperous conditions on account of its strategic situation, especially with regard to the Wâdî al-Natrûn. Khalîl al-Dahirî (1189) informs us that the surroundings of Tarrâna were occupied by powerful tribes of Arab Bedouins, who were continually at war with each other. An old man, whose testimony he quotes, related that in a single engagement three thousand horsemen had been found dead in the field of battle (3). In 1264, al-Zâhir Baybars I (1260-1277), the Mamluk Sultan, paid a visit to the monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn, and on his way he stopped in Tarrâna (4). For that matter, coming either from Cairo or from Alexandria, the harbour of Tarrâna provided the most convenient possibility for visiting the Coptic monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn. When Benjamin II, the 82nd Patriarch of Alexandria (1327-1339), went to the Monastery of St. Bishoi on account of a disaster which had befallen that monastery, he too stayed overnight on his way in Tarrâna, travelling from there to the Monastery of St. Macarius and then north to the Monastery of St. Bishoi (5). During the month of Ramadân 872 A.H. (March 1468), Sultan Malik Ashraf Abu'l Nasr Sayf al-Dîn Qaitbâî spend several days at Tarrâna (6) and later, finding Bardbak, the simple inspector of this small town to be quite worthy, he promoted him and gave him the governorship of Safad (7).

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(1) Quoted by Toussoun, O., *Etude sur le Wadi Natrun.* Alexandria, 1931, p. 35.

(2) Jaubert, A., *Géographie d'Edrisi.* Paris, 1836. Vol. I, p. 324. Dozy, R. and De Goeje, M.J., *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne par Edrîzî.* Leyde, 1866, p. 190.

(3) Schefer, Charles, *Etude sur la Devise des Chemins de Babiloine.* Archives de l'Orient Latin. Paris, 1884, Vol. II, p. 99.

(4) Quatremère, Et., *Histoire des sultans mamlouks de l'Egypte.* London, 1837. Vol. I, p. 246. Sadeque, Syedah Fatima, *Baybars I of Egypt.* Pakistan, Oxford Press, 1956, p. 233.

(5) Evelyn White, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

(6) Ibn Iyas, *Histoire des Mamlouks Circassiens.* (Transl. Gaston Wiet) Cairo. 1945. Vol. II, p. 116. Also. Guest, A..R, « The Delta in the Middle Ages, » *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1912, p. 978.

(7) Ibn Iyas, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

Like the Patriarchs and Sultans, the mediaeval pilgrims to the monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn also stopped at Tarrâna, which was known to the 15th century Franks as 'Alterana'. It seems that the Christian population of the town, which, by this time, had decreased to a very small minority, tried to offer its services to guide visitors across the desert to the monasteries. Josse van Ghistele (1481-1484) lodged in Tarrâna because one of his servants insisted that he should visit the fine Monastery of St. Macarius, which merited the trouble of being seen, and which happened to be « in the neighbourhood » (1).

A brief reference to Tarrâna is included in the diary of Sultan al-Ashraf (1501-1516), who in January 1515 travelled from Damanhûr via Nadjâla to Tarrâna, where he spent a day and a night (2). The fact that lodging facilities for travellers must have existed in Tarrâna, was an additional reason for government officials to stay there rather than in any of the neighbouring villages. By the 17th century, the number of European pilgrims and visitors to the monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn had significantly increased (3), and the inhabitants of Tarrâna charged two piastres for each horse from the town to the Monastery of St. Macarius, and four piastres for each horseman, who accompanied the travellers to provide the necessary protection (4). By this time, Tarrâna was the residence of the *cachef,* who was in charge of the desert-frontiers of Libya (5). Travelling through the Nile Delta was by no means always safe as Johann Michael Wansleben, the well-known theologian and historian who visited Egypt in 1672, testified. Sailing up the Western Branch of the Nile from Rosetta to Tarrâna, a trivial incident inspired some Bedouins of Tarrâna with a fantastic idea of his wealth, and a plot being laid to waylay

(1) Saint-Génois, *Les Voyageurs Belges au XXIe-XVIIe siècle.* Brussels, n.d., pp. 169-170.

(2) Wiet, Gaston, *Journal d'un Bourgeois du Caire.* Cairo, 1945. Vol. I, p. 392.

(3) Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts.* Cairo, 1961, pp. 136-140, 183-192, 221-225, 251-255.

(4) Coppin, J., *Relation des voyages faits dans la Turquie, la Thébaide et la Barbarie.* London, 1720, p. 344.

(5) Coppin, *loc. cit.*

and murder him, Wansleben was forced to abandon his project to visit the Coptic monasteries. However, during his stay in Tarrâna, he gathered some valuable information concerning the Wâdî al-Natrûn monasteries (1). No doubt, Wansleben met the *hegoumenos* and some of the monks of the Dair al-Suriân, who until 1774 used to reside in Tarrâna (2), when the dependency was transferred to the nearby village of Atrîs.

About one hundred years after Wansleben's visit to Tarrâna, C.S. Sonnini de Manoncour (1777-1780) visited the town. Apparently, however, the situation in terms of safety for European visitors had not changed, and the account of the former French naval officer reflects in many ways a very similar picture to that given by Wansleben. « A *cachef* resided in Tarrâna, a town well enclosed and entirely built with mud bricks as are all the villages of these districts. In the surroundings, one sees rubbish-heaps, vestiges of the ancient Terenuthis. The ruins are actually known in the country as Abou Bellou. The population of Tarrâna is wicked and ferocious, and the absence of the *cachef,* who was with the army, makes it still more dangerous. We were insulted and threatened there. They had heard there the news of my journey to the desert, and, according to the custom, they said that I had found treasures there. My boat was believed to be laden with them (treasures), and the inhabitants of Tarrâna formed a plan of taking them away during the night. We informed our guards as some people were wandering about on the river bank, but none of them dared to approach us. There was a Turk, who made very good gunpowder. This poor creature, who was young, had a white beard and a strangled voice resulting from his fear of 'Alî Bey, who, suspecting him of supplying powder to the Be-

(1) Vansleb, J. M., *Nouvelle relation en forme de Journal d'un Voyage fait en Egypte en 1672 et 1673.* Paris, 1677, p. 227. The potential danger for Western travellers in the past is also attested by the experience of F.L. Griffith. An attack of the fellahin upon the bedouins had taken place. At the time of his visit in 1887, they were expecting vengeance at any moment.

(2) Monks of the Dair as-Suriân, *Sirat al-Anbâ Yuhannis Kame, tarîkh Dair as-Suriân. Wâdî 'n-Natrûn,* 1951, p. 55.

douins, whom he wished to destroy, ordered that they should behead him. The tyrant, however, revoked the order for the moment. This also made a great impression» (1). In 1789, Tarrâna became the inland port for the export of natron from the salt-lakes to Marseille, and thus its significance as a trading centre increased considerably (2).

During the last decade of the 18th century, W.G. Brown visited Tarrâna and the ruins of Kôm Abû Billo «where are many columns and other considerable remains, which indicate the site of ancient structures». The buildings of Tarrâna were constructed chiefly of «unburned brick», but there were also some stone buildings. The town belonged to Murad Bey who, however, had entrusted the collection of the revenue there to Mr. Carlo Rosseti, a Venetian merchant. Mr. Rosseti, well-known throughout Egypt, was appointed consul-general of the Emperor of Germany (3), and the authority which he had obtained over the district of Tarrâna was almost equal to that exercised in former days by the *cachefs*. In order to control the shipments of natron from the Wâdî al-Natrûn to Tarrâna and from there to the various nations of Europe, Mr. Rosseti had sent as his deputy Mr. Ferrari, his nephew, to reside in Tarrâna. In spite of the «Sclavonian» soldiers, who were under his authority for his protection, Mr. Ferrari died after a short time « not without suspicion of poison » (4). Most of the travellers who passed through Tarrâna merely provided us with a brief mention of the name of the town (5) although Heinrich Brugsch, who went from Tarrâna to the Monastery of the Syrians, informs us that at

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(1) Sonnini. C.S., *Voyage dans la Haute et Basse-Egypte*. Paris, An. VII de la Rép., vol. II, pp. 227-228.

(2) Trécourt, J.B., *Mémoires sur l'Egypte*. Cairo, 1942, pp. 25, 91. Savary, *Lettres sur l'Egypte*. Paris, 1786, vol. I, p. 73.

(3) This must have been Francis II.

(4) Browne, W.G., *Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria from the year 1792-1798*. London, 1799, p. 36.

(5) Joliffe, T.R., *Lettres sur la Palestine, la Syrie et l'Egypte*. Paris, 1817, p. 296. Curzon, Robert, *Visits to the Monasteries in the Levant*. London, 1847, p. 92. Wilkinson, G., *Modern Egypt and Thebes*. London, 1843, vol. I, p. 387. Tischendorf. K., *Travels in the East*. London, 1847, p. 45. Graul, K., *Reise durch Egypten*. Leipzig, 1854, p. 242.

the very end of the village there was a house of European appearance, which was the summer-residence of Mr. Gibara, the leaseholder of the lakes of the Wâdî al-Natrûn (1).

The parish of Tarrâna consists of altogether seven villages, including al-Khatâtba, Kôm Hamâdah and Kafr Dâûd. According to the parish-priest, approximately five hundred Christians belong to the parish. The Church of the Holy Virgin in Tarrâna, which belongs to the diocese of Beheira, was rebuilt in 1960. The church has three altars, which are dedicated to St. Michael (north), the Holy Virgin (centre) and St. George (south). The 19th century iconostasis is adorned with icons of St. Michael, the Holy Virgin, the Mystical Supper, St. Dimiana and her Forty Virgins and St. George. The Twelve Apostles on the top of the iconostasis are recent paintings of inferior quality. In the north-west corner of the church, there stands a *kouvouklion* with a modern icon of the Crucifixion. In the south-east corner of the church are the stairs that lead to the gallery. The present Christian cemetery, known as Baltûs is a small *kôm* which is situated south of Tarrâna. The land south of this *kôm* belongs to the Department of Antiquities, though no excavations have taken place there as yet.

According to the 1960 census figures, there are 240 Christians in Tarrâna, though the village priest states that only two or three Christian families are originally from Lower Egypt. Most Christians have come from Upper Egypt and settled in Tarrâna during the 19th century. The most notable Christian family of Tarrâna is that of Ibrâhîm Bey Dâûd with a holding of approximately four hundred feddans.

6. — THE MONASTIC DEPENDENCIES IN THE NILE DELTA

The fact that all the Coptic Monasteries are situated in the desert (with the exception of Dair al-Muharraq) neces-

(1) Brugsch, Heinrich, *Reiseberichte aus Aegypten, 1853-1854.* Leipzig, 1855, p. 16.

sitated the establishment of dependencies or supply centres in cultivated areas. These dependencies are, therefore, situated either in the fertile Nile Valley or in the Nile Delta. Generally speaking, they comprise a church, an episcopal residence, cells for the monks and a farm.

Until recently, monthly camel-caravans either from the Nile Valley or the Nile Delta travelled for days to reach the monasteries, and it is only since the fourth decade of the present century, that the camels have been replaced by lorries.

The dependencies are important as administrative centres, since in many instances they serve as the episcopal residence.

The Dependency of the Monastery of the Romans

The Dependency of the Monastery of the Romans (Dair al-Barâmûs) is situated at Tûkh Dalaka (at one time Tûkh al-Nasara) in the province of Menufiyah.

To reach the village of Tûkh Dalaka, one drives from Cairo via Qalyûb, Banha, Quweisna, Shibîn al-Kom to al-Kom al-Akhdar. Here, one turns east on an agricultural road and travels via al-Batanûn, at first in easterly direction, and after 8 km., in northerly direction to Tûkh Dalaka (94 km.).

> The Dependency was established in the 18th century. Many renovations have been carried out since 1948.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1876) has three haikals

> The central haikal is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the northern haikal to St. George and the southern haikal to the Archangel Michael. In the southern part of the church there is the baptismal font which is separated from the gynaikion by a wooden screen.

The supply-truck travelling monthly to the Dair al-Barâmûs follows the route via Tala-Tanta-Kafr al-Zaiyât to

al-Khatâtba, and from thence to the Cairo-Alexandria Rest House and the Monastery (162 km.).

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Bishoi

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Bishoi (Dair Anbâ Bishoî) has been in the village of Kafr-Dâûd since the beginning of the 19th century, when it was moved from the village of Atrîs. The dependency consists of the Church of St. Bishoî, the episcopal residence, a guest-house, and a few cells for the monks and storage rooms.

To visit the dependency, one drives from Cairo to the Muhammad Alî Barrages, and from there along al-Muhît Canal via Nikla, Bani Salâma, al-Khatâtba, al-Tarrâna to Kafr Dâûd (78 km.).

The Church of St. Bishoi was built in or around 1951, and the many wall paintings were carried out by Abûnâ al-Azar al-Bishoî. The small church has one haikal which is dedicated to St. Bishoi. The episcopal throne is placed on the northern side of the central aisle. The icons in the church represent St. George, Christ, St. Bishoi and St. Mark.

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Macarius

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Macarius (Dair Abû Maqâr) is situated in Atrîs (Menufiyah). One drives from Cairo north to the Muhammad Alî Barrages, and then follows the agricultural road along al-Muhît Canal to Bani Salâma. At Bani Salâma one turns in an easterly direction to Atrîs, a village situated on the Rosetta Branch of the Nile (73 km.).

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Macarius is the largest dependency of the four Monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn.

In the 5th century, Atrîs was known through its monastery with which the three saints of Menufiyah are identified, St. Isidore and SS. John and Julian. Remains of this ancient site are still visible. Three Doric capitals,

two of which are in front of the main entrance, the third one in the main-court of the dependency, can still be seen.

The Church of St. Macarius has three haikals of which the central one is dedicated to St. Macarius, the northern haikal to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the southern haikal to St. George. The icons, which are attached to the haikal screen represent from north to south St. Dimiana and her Forty Virgins, two icons of the three Macarii, St. George and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The beautiful wooden haikal-screen bears the date of 1865. An icon of the Crucifixion, painted in 1876, is placed in the niche of the central haikal.

The Dependency of the Monastery of the Syrians

The Dependency of the Monastery of the Syrians (Dair al-Surîân) is also situated in the village of Atrîs. It was established about 1830. Like all the other dependencies it has a church, a guesthouse, a few cells and storage facilities. The dependency is situated about one kilometre east of the Dependency of the Monastery of St. Macarius. It is advisable to leave one's car on the agricultural road which runs parallel to the Rosetta Branch of the Nile.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary has three haikals of which the central one is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the northern haikal to St. John the Baptist and the southern haikal to St. George. The haikal screen dates from 1871. Of special interest is the icon of St. Macarius (1866). The baptismal font is situated on the north side of the church.

Lit. : Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts.* Cairo, 1961.

7. — THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF PORT SAID

Port Said, a seaport at the northern entrance to the Suez Canal, is situated on a peninsula between the Mediterranean and Lake Manzala. Founded in 1859, Port Said owes its existence and prosperity to the Suez Canal. With the increase of its population, connected at first with the construction,

later with the administration of the Suez Canal, Christian churches were founded to serve the spiritual needs of the people.

Before 1967, Port Said possessed seventeen churches belonging to the various Christian denominations.

The Coptic Church

The Copts had two churches in Port Said, the Church of the Holy Virgin which dates back to about 1900, and the Church of St. George at Sharia Muhammad Alî. The Church of St. George, which was built in 1952, had two haikals which are dedicated to St. George and to St. Anthony. The baptistery was situated in the northern part of the Church. The church was adorned with many modern Coptic paintings by Yûsuf Fanûs.

The Greek Orthodox Church

The oldest Greek Orthodox Church in Port Said was the Cathedral of the Transfiguration (Metamorphosis) at Sharia Sa'd Zaglul. A gift of the Suez Canal Company to the Greek community, the cathedral was planned in 1888 and consecrated in 1903. The cathedral served as the See of the Bishop of Pelusium. Attached to the building were a primary and a secondary school.

The Catholic Church

The Church of St. Eugenia at Sharia Kawala was the oldest Catholic church in Port Said serving mainly the Italian and Maltese constituency. There was a beautiful wall painting of the martyrdom of St. Eugenia above the altar.

The largest church in Port Said was the French Cathedral of St. Marie Reine du Monde.

> On December 8, 1930, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the Anniversary of the Apparition of the Holy Virgin to St. Catherine Labouré, the Vicariate of the Canal Zone was dedicated to St. Marie Reine du Monde.

The construction of the cathedral was begun in 1936 and the six bells of the majestic bell-tower were dedicated on February 6, 1938. The cathedral has three naves which are separated by octagonal pillars, the capitals of which are beautifully decorated. On the large stone altar, made in Belgium, stands the cross and the candelabras which are the work of Savon of Port Said. On the door of the tabernacle is a representation of the Holy Virgin and Child.

Behind the altar, in the small chapel, is a white marble statue of the Holy Virgin. This statue was made by Billaux-Grossé of Brussels according to the specification of St. Catherine Labouré. The numerous ex-votos, which are placed around the statue, are expressions of piety and devotion of sailors and travellers.

The wall paintings of the Cathedral are most significant and represent the three manifestations of the universe. The sidereal world, the angelic world and the human world. We find represented the Holy Trinity, the Evangelists, the Symbols of the Zodiac, the Constellations, the Cross, the World of the Saints and the Leaders of Humanity. The 207 Saints which are represented are divided into the following groups : The Patriarchs and Prophets, the Contemporaries of Jesus Christ, the Apostles, the Holy Martyrs, the Popes, the Doctors of the Church, the Oriental Saints, the Founders of the Monastic Orders, the Women Martyrs, the Founders of Convents and Congregations of Nuns and the Holy Queens. The World of the Angels shows representations of the Archangels, the Angels in the lives of the Saints and the Angels and Purgatory.

The Cathedral has the following side chapels which are dedicated to St. Catherine Labouré, St. Bernadotte, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Joseph, St. Curé d'Ars, St. Antony, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, St. Anne, and St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle.

The most modern Catholic church in Port Said is the Maronite Church of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus at Sharia Ibrahîm, which was consecrated in 1950. The style of the Church was neo Assyro-Babylonian and was similar to that of the Syrian Catholic Church of St. Catherine at Heliopolis. The Shrine of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus was adorned by hundreds of ex-votos.

The Egyptian Episcopal Church

The Church of the Epiphany, which was build in 1889, belongs to the Episcopal Church of Egypt. The Church was situated at Sharia al-Nahda.

In 1882, the Church of England commenced work in Port Said in cooperation with St. Andrew's Waterside Mission. The temporary church building was replaced in 1889 when the present Byzantine style place of worship was dedicated.

The Protestant Churches

There were two Evangelical churches represented in Port Said. The Holiness Evangelical Coptic Church, which is an outgrowth of the Peniel Mission, was situated on July 23rd Street. Not far from this church was the Apostolic Church of the Assemblies of God, situated at 86, July 23rd Street.

CHAPTER XVIII

EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN CAIRO

The site now known as Old Cairo is mentioned by Strabo (24 B.C.) and by Ptolemy (121-151 A.D.) under the name Babylon. Through this town there ran a canal connecting the Nile with the Red Sea, which was reopened by the Roman Emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.), who likewise enlarged and fortified the fortress which was built at the southern end of this town. This fortress known as the Castle of Babylon, or Castle of Egypt (Khemi), was further enlarged by the Emperor Arcadius (395-408 A.D.). It is not known at what date this city became a bishopric, but it was certainly one in the first half of the 5th century, since we read of a certain Cyrus, bishop of Babylon, who was present at the Council of Ephesus held in 449 A.D. At the time of the Arab Conquest of Egypt, Babylon seems to have been a large city extending northwards as far as Tendounias ('Um Dunain), the present district of al-Azbakiyah, where there was a fortified outpost. This outpost was captured by the Arab general 'Amr ibn al-'As who speedily occupied the city as far as the Castle of Babylon to which he laid siege. On April 9th, 641 A.D., this castle, to which the Arabs gave the name Qasr al-Sham, surrendered, whereupon the Arabs marched against Alexandria which was eventually evacuated under treaty by the Byzantine army, which sailed away on September 29, 642 A.D.

After the Arab Conquest of Egypt, the name Babylon became more and more used to denote the district immediately around the Castle of Egypt, or Qasr al-Sham, which eventually became a quarter inhabited chiefly by Christians. Where

'Amr ibn al-'As had pitched his camp at the siege of the Castle of Egypt, a new quarter arose which was called al-Fustât from the Greek word « fossaton » meaning « camp », which was inhabited mainly by the Arabs. As capital of Egypt and seat of the government, the city rapidly increased in size and importance, and eventually became known as Misr. Already in 743 A.D. we hear of a certain Theodore, bishop of Misr, who assisted at the election of Khâîl I, as Patriarch of Alexandria, at the Church of St. Shenute. The episcopal see of Misr took the place of the older see of Babylon, and its cathedral church was that of St. Mercurius until the reign of the Patriarch Christodoulos (1047-1077 A.D.), who transferred the seat of the Patriarchate from Alexandria to Cairo and made this church a patriarchal one.

As regards the churches of Babylon we possess no information about them prior to the Arab Conquest of Egypt, but since there was a bishop of Babylon in the 5th century, we may assume that the cathedral was not the only church in the city. Our earliest reference is to the Church of St. Sergius in which, forty-three years after the Arab Conquest, a certain Isaac was elected patriarch of Alexandria.

When, indeed, it happened that the Christians were allowed to reconstruct a church which had been destroyed in the course of disturbances, they naturally made use of as much of the original material as could be saved, and thus it comes about that we often find wood-work or stone-work in a church which is definitely much earlier in date than the rest of the fabric. When the Coptic Museum was founded in 1908, a good deal of early material which was in danger of being lost through restoration was removed from the churches, and is now preserved in this Museum.

Lit. : Baedeker, K., *Egypt and the Sudan.* Leipzig, 1914.
Burmester, O. H. E. Khs-, *A Guide to the Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo.* Cairo, 1955.
Butler, A. J., *Babylon of Egypt.* Oxford, 1914.
Marcus H. Simaika Pasha, C.B.E., F.S.A., *A Brief Guide to the Coptic Museum and to the Principal Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo.* Cairo, 1938.
Toy, Sidney, « Babylon of Egypt, » *Journal, Brit. Arch. Ass.*, III, vol. I.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF CAIRO

1. — THE COPTIC CHURCHES OF BABYLON OR QASR AL-SHAM'

The ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo are, for the most part, situated in Old Cairo, and especially in the enclosure of the Roman Castle of Babylon which is known as Qasr al-Sham'. The Castle of Babylon, already mentioned by Strabo (24 B.C.), was enlarged and fortified by the Roman Emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.) and further enlarged by the Emperor Arcadius (395-408 A.D.). Following the surrender of the castle to the Arab general 'Amr ibn al-'As in 641 A.D., it became a locality inhabited almost exclusively by Christians.

To reach Old Cairo, the tourist is advised to take the train from Bâb al-Lûq station to the station of Mârî Girgis, or by car from Midân al-Tahrîr passing along Sharia Qasr al-Aini and Fum al-Khalîg, as far as the bridge leading to the Island of Rodah. From there turn left, and pass beneath the railway bridge and turn right, taking the street which leads straight to the railway station of Mârî Girgis.

In front of the railway station of Mârî Girgis are the two towers of the Roman Castle of Babylon. By the side of the right tower, which is ruined, is a doorway which leads to the courtyard of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, known as the Mu'allaqah, the Suspended.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary (al-Mu'allaqah)

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary (al-Mu'allaqah) which is situated facing the railway station of Mârî Girgis owes its title of «The Suspended» to the fact that its eastern and western ends rest on the two south-western bastions of the Castle of Babylon. Its nave is suspended over the passage which leads into the Castle between these two bastions. The position of the church can be best understood by descending a flight of steps leading down from the enclosed garden of the Coptic Museum. The church has three haikals ; the central one dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the northern one to St. George and the southern one to St. John the Baptist.

> The Church was probably built during the patriarchate of Isaac (684-687 A.D.), when the advisability of building a church in a place difficult of access would have been obvious. Otherwise, the earliest reference to the church seems to be the statement in the biography of the Patriarch Joseph (830-849 A.D.) where we read that the governor of Egypt « came to the church which is in the Fortress of ash-Sham', called the Suspended ». The church was rebuilt in the reign of the Patriarch Abraham (975-978 A.D.). In the 11th century it became the official residence of the Coptic Patriarchs of Alexandria. During the patriarchate of Christodoulus (1047-1078) a quarrel for supremacy in the Qasr al-Sham' broke out between the Church of St. Sergius and the Mu'allaqah. Whereas, it was the practice to consecrate the new patriarchs in the Church of St. Sergius, Christodoulus went to the Mu'allaqah. Cyril II as well as Michael IV were consecrated at the Mu'allaqah. In the course of its long history this church has been many times restored ; the last restoration was made in the latter part of the 19th century. Objects of historical interest, which were no longer of service, were removed and are preserved in the Coptic Museum.

The church is of the basilican order. Of special interest is the wagon-vaulted roof in timber and the white marble columns (except one which is of black basalt) which separate the nave from the aisles. The small tank, sunk in the

floor of the nave and which is now boarded over, is called a Mandatum Tank. It was formerly used for the Service of the Foot-washing on Maundy Thursday and on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul. The marble ambon (pulpit) is to be assigned to the 11th century. The central haikal screen, which is of ebony inlaid with ivory, dates from the 12th to the 13th century. On the top of the screen are seven large icons. The altar is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

> These icons represent Christ enthroned (centre), and on the right, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Archangel Gabriel and St. Peter ; on the left, St. John the Baptist, the Archangel Michael and St. Paul. Behind the altar is the marble tribune which has three straight and three curved steps beside the topmost bench.

The northern haikal is dedicated to St. George and its screen has a design of squares with crosses which are alternately ivory and ebony. Above the screen are seventeen icons (1777 A.D.) representing scenes from the martyrdom of St. George.

The southern sanctuary is dedicated to St. John the Baptist. The haikal-screen shows a cruciform pattern and dates from the 13th century. On the top of the screen are seven small icons which represent different periods in the life of St. John the Baptist. All these icons are the work of an Armenian artist, executed in 1777 A.D.

The little Church occupies the floor of the bastion to the right of the gateway of the Roman Castle. The visitor should notice on the right the beautiful 13th century screen which is inlaid with ivory and ebony. Further on, there is the baptistery. Returning to the entrnce door of the little Church, one sees on the right the Sanctuary of St. Takla Haymanot, the national Saint of Ethiopia. The screen dates from the 13th century.

On the east wall of the Sanctuary of St. Takla Haymanot there is a damaged wall painting representing the twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse. The Elders are portrayed standing in one row and clothed in priestly vestments, name-

ly, the stichariсon, the epitrachelion and the phelonion, and their heads are surrounded with halos. Above the heads of the Seven Elders in the centre, there is a Coptic text which reads : « I rejoiced with those who said of me : 'We shall go to the House of the Lord. Our feet have stood in the courts of Jerusalem' ».

Whereas at one time many, if not all, of the columns of this church were adorned with paintings, today, only the picture on one column can be seen.

The fifth column from the east in the southern row is adorned with a painting of a beardless person with a nimbus wearing a coronet. This person is a female saint, possibly a queen or a princess. In her right hand she holds a scroll. She is clothed in a phelonion (?), very similar to the vestment worn by the Empress Eudoxia on the 11th century ivory in the Cabinet des Médailles at Paris. At the bottom of the painting, there used to be a Coptic text of which, however, only two letters can be read. The colours of the painting are red, ochre, yellow, brown, gray, light blue and black. The painting, which faces the east, has a length of 120 cm. and a width of 37 cm. at the bottom and 30 cm. at the top.

The Church of St. Sergius

The Church of St. Sergius (Abû Sârgah) can be reached either by descending the flight of steps to the left of the entrance to the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, and then passing through the narrow lane and turning to the right, or by descending the steps from the garden in front of the Coptic Museum. The Church of St. Sergius is probably the most ancient church in Old Cairo. It is built over the traditional site which was visited by the Holy Family on their flight to Egypt. The church was also known as the Church of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Flesh.

In 859 A.D., Shenute, the 55th Patriarch, was elected to his office in this church. In 977 A.D., Abraham, the 62nd Patriarch was also elected to his office in the church after which he celebrated the Divine Liturgy first in the Mu'allaqah and then in the Church of St. Sergius.

The Church of St. Sergius is of basilican type. A large tank is sunk in the floor at the western end of the church, the narthex. This tank was formerly used for the Service of the Blessing of the Water on the Feast of the Epiphany. The twelve columns round the nave are all of white marble with the exception of one, which is of granite. Traces of figures can still be seen on them. The marble ambon (pulpit) rests on ten columns.

The screen of the central sanctuary dates probably from the 13th century. The upper part of this screen contains small panels of ebony set with large crosses of solid ivory. Above the panels are icons of the Twelve Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The screen is decorated with several panels which have come from the leaves of a door, and which are assigned to the 11th or 12th century. Those on the right depict three warrior-saints, while those on the left show the Nativity and the Last Supper. The altar stands beneath a large and lofty canopy which is borne upon four Saracenic columns. The screens of the northern and southern sanctuary are inlaid with plain ivory.

The southern sanctuary is no longer used for Divine Services. Several icons adorn this site which the visitor should note : SS. Sergius and Bacchus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Flight into Egypt and the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The southern wall is also adorned with numerous icons.

The northern sanctuary is roofed with a large dome, and in the east wall there is a small tribune of three bow-shaped steps in the centre of which is the Synthronus. The baptistery is situated at the western end of the northern aisle. The southern gallery has a sanctuary which is dedicated to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while the northern gallery has a sanctuary which is dedicated to St. Michael.

The Sanctuary of the Holy Family is situated in a crypt beneath the centre of the choir and part of the central sanctuary. It is entered by a stairway which leads down from the southern sanctuary. During the inundation of the Nile this crypt is inaccessible for about two months, as the water seeps into it to a depth of about one metre.

The sanctuary has an altar but no sanctuary screen. The southern aisle is used as a baptistery, and has at its east end the baptismal font. An icon of the Baptism of Christ is attached to the wall.

We may assume that at the time of the 12th century restoration of the church, the walls of the central apse and the nave including the former apsidal chapel were adorned with elaborate paintings, of which only two fragments have survived to this day. The mediaeval pilgrims to the Holy Land, who visited this church, spoke of altars, paintings and pictures with representations of the Passion of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin.

Alfred Butler, who studied this church in the latter part of the 19th century, still saw traces of a wall painting of Christ standing with his right hand upraised in benediction and holding in his left hand a scroll bearing an inscription in Coptic letters signifying : 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world'. The figure wears a glory, but no mitre, an amice covering the head and falling on the shoulders ; a fine cope embroidered with a diaper pattern and fastened by a triple-lobed morse ; an alb, girdle and perhaps sleeve. The still more prominent figure at the other end of the curve was more fully bearded and vested in an early chasuble and nimbed, carrying in each hand a cross. Of the figures between, which filled the apse, only very faint tokens remained. Needless to say none of these wall paintings can be seen today.

In the central apse, there are two fragments of paintings. On the northern side of the curve there is a fragment of a sadly damaged painting of a saint with a nimbus (92 cm. wide × 119 cm. high). On the southern side of the curve there is a fragment of a painting of two saints. The painting of the saint on the right is in fairly good condition. The letters Ⲟ ⲁⲅⲓⲟⲥ are written vertically, the letters ⲫⲁⲛ are written horizontally. The saint is probably St. Epiphanius, the Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, who is commemorated in the Coptic Church on the 17th of Bashons or the 25th of May. One can clearly identify two layers of wall paintings, both of which were damaged. The heads of the saints appear on the upper layer, whereas the colourful vestments in red, green, gray, light gray and black belong to the lower layer. The paintings show many signs of intentional damage.

We suggest that the first layer of these apse paintings belongs to the 11th and 12th centuries, the period when the Church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus enjoyed episcopal and even patriarchal privileges. The second layer of the paintings, *i.e.* the restoration of the faces of the saints, should be assigned to the period of the general restoration of the church in the second half of the 12th century.

On the upper southern wall of the haikal, there is a relief of the Terra Santa Cross, indicating the relationship which this church used to have with the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.

The twelve monolithic columns, with the exception of one column which is of granite, are of white marble. The circumference of the marble columns varies from 122 cm. to 135 cm., the granite column having a circumference of 190 cm. The capitals are of a debased Corinthian style. Five columns separate the nave on each side from the northern and southern aisles. Two columns separate the nave from the vestibule in the west. Each of the eleven marble columns was adorned with a painting of an apostle or a saint varying from 131 cm. to 146 cm. in height and 51 cm. to 54 cm. in width, facing the nave. Traces of these paintings on the five southern and two eastern columns are still visible, though it is impossible to determine the identity of the persons portrayed. The paintings on the easternmost and the two westernmost columns of the southern row as well as those on the two western columns are best preserved. The pillar paintings should be assigned to the 8th century. They were severely damaged in the 12th century, when the church was pillaged by the Ghuzz.

Below the painting on the southernmost column of the western row facing the nave, on the middle column of the northern row facing the north and on the easternmost column of the northern row facing the nave, there are three Coptic inscriptions, which, however, ought to be assigned to a much later date.

Fedden discovered that since the 14th century there existed a rather intimate connection of the Church of St. Sergius and the Western pilgrims. True, few Franks who visited Cairo in the Middle Ages failed to make a pilgrimage to the Church of St. Sergius. In 1323, Willelmi Bonemayn, probably a French consul, omtained the re-opening of the church from the Sultan Malik al-Nâsir, for

no services had been celebrated there after the disturbances in 1321. From the accounts of the 17th and 18th century travellers it emerges that the Franciscans, who for many years owned a hospice nearby, had also for long periods the right of saying Mass in the crypt of the church, and for some time apparently even controlled it. (See Bremond, 1644 ; Wansleben, 1672 ; Morison, 1697 ; Lorenzo Cozza, 1711).

The reason for the permission granted to the Franciscans to say Mass in the Church of St. Sergius seems to be a *quid pro quo* for permission granted to the Coptic Church to maintain a small room or chapel in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. By the middle of the 18th century the Catholics still maintained an altar there, though later they had to pay for the privilege of entry even to the crypt.

Lit. : Fedden, R., « The Notes on Christian Cairo in the Turkish Period, » *Bull. Soc. Arch. Copte*, X, 33 f.

The Church of St. Barbara

The visitor should now return to the lane by which he came to the Church of St. Sergius, and then continue down it, taking the first turning to the left, which will bring him to the Church of St. Barbara.

The church, originally dedicated to the Unmercenary Physicians of the Church, SS. Cyrus and John, was, according to Eutychius, built by a certain wealthy scribe in 684 A.D. Later, when the relics of St. Barbara were translated to this church, a new sanctuary was added to house the relics.

The present edifice comprises two distinct churches, one dedicated to St. Barbara and the other to SS. Cyrus and John.

In the nave one should note the beautiful marble ambon (pulpit), which is borne on ten columns.

The screen of the central haikal, inlaid with carved ivory in relief, dates from the 13th century. Along the top of this screen are the following icons : in the centre Christ, and on His right, the Holy Virgin Mary, St. Mark, St. Michael, St. Matthew ; on His left, St. Gabriel, St. John

the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist, and St. Luke. Most of these icons were painted in 1745 A.D. This sanctuary, as well as the northern and southern sanctuaries, is under a lofty semidome. The tribune in this church is similar to that of the Church of St. Sergius.

The southern sanctuary, no longer used for Divine Service, contains the shrine of St. Barbara with her relics. The screen of the northern sanctuary dates from the Fatimid period (972-1171 A.D.).

Passing through the northern transept of the Church of St. Barbara, one enters the Church of SS. Cyrus and John.

The Church of SS. Cyrus and John

The Church of SS. Cyrus and John which is almost square in shape, comprises a nave, choir, two sanctuaries and a baptistery. The southern sanctuary is dedicated to St. George, and the northern sanctuary to SS. Cyrus and John. At the corner of the south wall, one should note the icon of SS. Cyrus and John together with a case containing their relics.

The baptistery which is in a line with the two sanctuaries, has a polygonal font set in a mass of masonry.

The large tank, now boarded over, which was formerly used for the Service of the Blessing of the Water on the Feast of the Epiphany, is situated at the south-west of this church.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary (al-'Adhrâ Qasriat al-Rihân)

After passing the doorway in the Roman wall and following the narrow lane, the visitor will take the first turning to the left which will take him directly to the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

According to the *History of the Patriarchs*, the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary served as a residence for twenty-seven days for the Patriarch Khâîl III (860-

907 A.D.), when he was released from the prison in which he had been confined by Ahmad Ibn Tûlûn. We hear of this church again, when Assenius, a brother of the Greek concubine of al-Hâkim was elected Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church in Egypt, *ca.* 985 A.D., and obtained possession of it for the Greek Orthodox Community of Cairo. It was still in the hands of the Greek Orthodox Community at the time, when Mawhûb Ibn Mansûr compiled his part of the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church,* in 1088 A.D. In the 18th century this church was rebuilt.

The church which is nearly square in form, contains a nave, northern and southern aisles, choir and three haikals.

In the nave there is the usual Epiphany Tank which is boarded over. In the northern aisle there is a wooden ambon inlaid with ivory.

By the entrance door in the northern aisle there is an icon of the Holy Virgin Mary surrounded by Saints. In this same aisle there are two recesses, which are adorned with icons.

The screen of the central sanctuary is inlaid with ivory.

Along the top of it is a row of icons with the Holy Virgin Mary and Child in the centre and six Apostles on each side. Above this there is a rood. On the left of the Cross on which is depicted the Crucified Christ is a frame with a painting of the Holy Virgin Mary, and on the right side is another frame with a painting of St. John. On the walls of the sanctuary there are painted the twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse, and beneath these, a series of paintings of Saints.

The southern sanctuary is dedicated to St. Sarapamon. Its screen is of wood inlaid with plain ivory (1775 A.D.).

On the right of this screen there are two icons, one of St. Mercurius and the other of St. George (dated 1778 A.D.), and on the left of this screen there is an icon of St. Sarapamon. A door in this sanctuary gives access to the baptistery.

The northern sanctuary is dedicated to St. Michael. Its screen, which has two doors, is dated 1778 A.D.

On the north wall the following icons should be noted : the Baptism of Christ ; St. Barsum the Naked ; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ; St. Menas, St. Phoebammon (Fam) the Soldier, St. Justus and his son. On the west wall there are icons of the Crucifixion; St. Mercurius ; the Holy Virgin Mary ; St. George ; another icon of the Crucifixion ; the Holy Virgin Mary ; the Annunciation.

The Church of St. George

In the immediate vicinity of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the church of St. George (Mârî Girgis).

The original church of St. George (Mârî Girgis) was built by Athanasius, the scribe, who also founded the Church of SS. Cyrus and John (684 A.D.). This church is also mentioned in the biography of Patriarch Alexander II (704-729 A.D.). About a century ago, however, this church was destroyed by fire, and all that remains of the original edifice is a room known as the Hall of Nuptials.

The modern church, which has been erected on the site of the original church, is without architectural interest.

The Convent of St. George

Nearby the Church of St. George is the Convent of St. George (Dair Mârî Girgis lil Râhibât) which is inhabited at present by thirty nuns. A little door in the Convent wall facing the street gives access to a small court.

From within the Convent we descend by a stairway to the ancient part which dates from the 10th century. In the north, east and west walls of this hall there are doors which give access to narrow cells. There are fourteen cells in all, but six have been walled up. A door in the south gives access to a chamber in which there is a shrine containing an icon as well as the chain of St. George. This Convent is mentioned by al-Maqrîzî (d. 1441 A.D.).

Lit. : Bréval, R., Pauty, E., Meriel, E., *Les Eglises Coptes du Caire.* Cairo, 1936.
Butler, A., *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt.* 2 vols. Oxford, 1884.
Burmester, O. H. E. Khs-, *A Guide to the Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo.* Cairo, 1955.

2. — THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH AND MONASTERY OF St. GEORGE

The Greek Orthodox Church and Monastery of St. George is situated opposite the Bâb al-Lûq—Helwân railway station of Mârî Girgis. North of the church and the monastery is the Greek Orthodox cemetery with the Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin while the Greek Catholic cemetery is situated to the south-east of the Church of St. George.

The History of the Church and Monastery

The Church of St. George on its present site, *i.e.* on top of the northern tower of the ancient Roman Fortress of Babylon must date from a period posterior to the Arab Conquest. Probably the church was situated at one time at Memphis, and the monastery may have been one of the two Greek monasteries which are mentioned by Theodosius in 536 A.D. There is, however, a tradition which claims that the church was built by some Roman soldiers who venerated St. George. Another tradition claims that the church existed at the time of the Arab Conquest by 'Amr ibn al-'As. The first definite mention of this monastery occurs in the *Chronicle* of Eutychius, Greek Orthodox Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria (877-940 A.D.). A further mention of this church is made in the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* and by the 13th century historian Abu'l-Makârim, who assigned the church to the Copts, because of the weakness of the Melkites. In the latter part of the 13th century, the church is referred to by Ibn Duqmâq in his *Chronicle* who states that in the Roman Fortress of Old Cairo « there is a Church of St. George which belongs to the Melkites and which serves as a nunnery ; moreover, the Arabs called it *Dair al-Banât* ». The 15th century historian al-Maqrîzî mentions the church in his *Khitat* and speaks about the nunnery of St. George and the Nilometer inside the monastery. This nilometer was rediscovered some time ago by Fr. Arsenius Kacoviannis under the main church in the middle of the small Chapel of the Forty Martyrs. Towards the end of the 15th century, Daniel, Metropolitan of Smyrna (later of Ephesus), referred to the church. At this time, the church was on a high tower and in the possession of the Copts and in a

rather ruinous state. It included a nunnery, a hospital, a home for the aged, a hospice and an orphanage.

At the time of Joachim, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria (1487-1567), the monastery had been returned to the Greeks, and subsequently it was restored. Between the years 1577 and 1592, it was seen and described by Paisios, Metropolitan of Rhodes. From the latter part of the 16th century onwards, information about the monastery is quite regular. In the days of Joannicus, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria (1645-1657), the monastery also maintained a school. The icon of St. George is mentioned by Johann M. Wansleben (1672) who also speaks of the monastery as being inhabited by Greek Orthodox nuns. In the middle of the 17th century, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria passed through very difficult days. The Turks, who were eager to extract additional moneys from the Christians threatened to destroy many churches. In order to save the churches, Gerasimus II (1689), Patriarch of Alexandria, addressed himself to the Tsar for help. From this correspondence we learn that the Church of St. George was not only a nunnery, but also a hospital and a place for refuge for those who were persecuted. In 1714, the Patriarch appealed again to the Tsar Peter for his financial assistance, and in this context it was mentioned that the home for the aged supported more than 60 people.

We do not know exactly when St. George's ceased to be a nunnery. It continued to function as a hospital and a home for the aged until 1904, when the church was destroyed by fire.

Butler (1884) describes the monastery as « perched like an eagle's nest on the very top of the tower, which not only offers a splendid bird's eye view of Old Cairo, but is in itself a most ancient and curious structure. The folding doors of the church contain eight small panels beautifully carved, but unfortunately smeared with thick layers of paint. The church is adorned by ostrich eggs and sanctuary lamps and on the walls are some magnificent examples of both Damascus and Rhodian tile-work. The church was demolished at the time of the war in 1882 ». Fr. Jullien (1891) states that until the 18th century, the monastery was occupied by Greek Orthodox nuns. In the latter part of the 19th century, however, the place was used as a hospice for those Greek families who desired to leave Cairo for a certain time. According to Jullien, the church had only one altar. In a chapel,

which adjoined the church, there was an edicule which contained, behind an iron grille, an arm of St. George which possessed the power to cure the insane. Those suffering from mental diseases were chained for twenty-four hours to the wall in front of the relics. They were given bread and water only, and after the experience they were released as cured !

The church was destroyed by fire on Wednesday, August 4, 1904, due, it appears, to a votive candle which was carelessly stuck on the wooden *kouvouklion* of the church. Others say that thieves had started the fire after stealing the offerings which were presented to the Saint. Others maintain that St. George had caused the destruction of the church since it had ceased to be a house of prayer. Though everything was destroyed, the icon and the relics remained untouched.

The church was rebuilt and consecrated by Photius I, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, on November 1, 1909.

The Church of St. George, which is a circular building, is constructed on the very top of the northern tower of the Fortress of Babylon. Passing the entrance which leads to the Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. George, one turns south and ascends a flight of 56 steps to the church door. Between the second and the third flight of stairs, there is an impressive bas-relief of St. George. The belfry is on the western end of the platform. Upon entering the church, there is a *kouvouklion* on the left which contains the famous icon of St. George. The church has one altar and the iconostasis is adorned with the icons of the Holy Virgin, Pentecost and Christ. The two ambons which flank the iconostasis are adorned with icons of the hierarchs. Several icon-stands are placed throughout the rotunda. On the south side is a staircase leading down to the chapels which are situated in the tower underneath the principal church. These are the Chapel of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, the Chapel of St. Theodoroi, the Chapel of St. Christophorus, the Chapel of St. Stephanus, the Prison of St. George, the Chapel of St. Mark, the Chapel of the Crucifixion, the Chapel of the Hierarchs and the Chapel of the Nativity.

Visitors should note the hagiographic museum where

many valuable icons, liturgical objects and ecclesiastical vestments are exhibited.

The Monastery of St. George next to the Tower is of interest because of its Hall of the Saints. This hall is divided into small sections which are dedicated to St. Isidorus of Pelusium, St. Antony the Great, St. Pachomius, St. Athanasius of Mount Athos, SS. Euthymius and Sabas, St. Paul the Theban and St. Theodosius. Here also are the offices of the patriarch and the hegoumenos. Some of the archives are on the first and on the second floor.

Lit. : Michailidis, Eugenios, Mone Tou Agiou Georgiou en Palaio Kairo. Alexandria, 1936.
Michailidis, Eugenios, Eikonographemenon Lefkoma. Alexandria, 1959.
Loukianoff, Elizabeth, *The Orthodox Icon and the Collection of the Monastery of St. George in Old Cairo.* Cairo, 1943.

The Panegyris of St. George in Old Cairo

The Feast of St. George is celebrated by the Greek Orthodox Church on April 23. In cairo, the celebrations begin a few days prior to that date as thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Egypt come to worship and offer their gifts to the Saint. The whole area around Mârî Girgis is then filled with the colourful Arab tents and small shops, restaurants and bars, while peddlers move freely around selling their merchandise to the pilgrims. Many of the pilgrims walk several miles to the monastery, an ancient custom, symbolizing the idea of the pilgrimage. Prior to the exodus of many Greeks, over 250,000 pilgrims used to come annually to the feast. The votive offerings presented to the Saint—in the form of silver or golden hands, legs, eyes, hearts etc. representing ailing parts of the body which had been or are expected to be cured by the intercession of the Saint, as well as the money put into the box in front of the miraculous icon — are said to amount to thousands of pounds every year.

Special arrangements are made by the Government for the transfer of the pilgrims. All trains from Bâb al-Lûq to

Helwân stop in front of the church, and a large number of buses is added to transport the many pilgrims to the church. Also many policemen are employed to maintain order.

On the Eve of the Feast, the pilgrims expect the annual apparition of the Saint. Every year St. George is implored to cure hundreds of sick people, paralytics, mentally disturbed pilgrims who are taken to Old Cairo by their families in the expectation to be touched by the Saint. Prayers are offered all through the night, and many are the stories of the apparitions and miracles of St. George.

A common experience on the Eve of St. George is to see the traditional dances and to hear the sound of the bouzoukia and guitars in honour of the church. The pilgrims are seated around small tables and consume grilled meat, chicken, and wine. Magicians, fire-eaters and weight-lifters entertain the pilgrims.

In the vicinity of the monastery and church is the Greek Orthodox cemetery, where thousands of Greeks are buried. It is customary that during the feast these tombs are visited and the pilgrims mourn while remembering their ancestors.

Divine Services commence with vespers around 4 p.m. on the 22nd of April. About midnight the apparition of St. George is expected to take place when most of the miracles happen. In the morning, the day of the feast, the Divine Liturgy is celebrated and the service concludes with a long procession led by the icon of St. George.

On the day of the feast, many pilgrims take their infants to be baptized in the monastery, and the usual custom is to name the child George, Georgia or Georgette. The panegyris of St. George is typical of a Greek fair held in honour of the patron Saint of a church. To the stranger this blending of the religious and the secular may seem incongruous, unless he bear in mind that, in the East, religion enters into everyday life and affairs in a manner very different from that in the West.

3. — THE COPTIC CHURCHES OF OLD CAIRO

The Monastery of St. Mercurius near Fum al-Khalîg

To reach the Monastery of St. Mercurius or the Dair Abû Saifain the visitor should proceed either by car or on foot northwards from the railway station of Mârî Girgis in the direction of Fum al-Khalîg. The Monastery of St. Mercurius is situated in Sharia Gami 'Amr.

> The former entrance was from the west side, and the ancient door of sycamore wood strengthened by bands of iron is now preserved in the Coptic Museum. At one time, this monastery was close to the bank of the Nile, but the river has gradually retreated till, at present, it is 600 metres distant from the monastery.

The monastery, which is surrounded by a high wall, contains three churches and a convent for nuns.

The Church of St. Mercurius

> This church was first mentioned in the time of the Patriarch Abraham (975-978 A.D.), when it was recorded that it had been demolished and had become a store for sugar-cane. Again in 1168 it was burnt, but it was rebuilt in 1176.

The church is remarkable for the number of its icons, which are fixed on either side on the walls and the columns of the church. In the nave, one should note the very beautiful ambon or pulpit, which is decorated with mosaics and which rests on fifteen columns. In the choir alone there are 63 icons by Hannâ al-Armanî.

The screen of the central sanctuary is of ebony inlaid with thin plates of ivory in the form of crosses and squares.

> The doorway is flanked by two Corinthian columns and has above it two icons, one of Christ and the other of the Holy Virgin. Below, there is a row of icons : in the centre Christ, Who has on His right the Holy Virgin Mary, St. Michael, and three Apostles, and on His left, St. John the Baptist, St. Gabriel and three Apostles.

In the sanctuary, the fine altar-canopy, in the form of a dome, rests on woodwork with four open-pointed arches which spring from four marble columns. Behind the altar there is the tribune which is faced with red and white marble, and above the niche, which contains a fresco of Christ, there are paintings of the Seraphim.

The southern sanctuary is now converted into a baptistery. At one time, this sanctuary was dedicated to St. Gabriel.

The northern sanctuary is dedicated to the Holy Virgin. Its wooden screen is inlaid with ivory and ebony.

In the northern aisle, a doorway opens on to a stairway which leads down to a small, dark, low underground chamber. This vaulted chamber has an altar, and here St. Barsum the Naked dwelt for twenty years. On the feast day of the Saint, a service is held in this shrine. St. Barsum the Naked died in 1317 A.D.

Leaving the northern aisle by a door, we enter a courtyard northeast of the Church of St. Mercurius, on the left of which is a building which contains the sanctuaries of St. James the Sawn-asunder, St. George and St. Gabriel. To the right again, we have the baptistery. These sanctuaries are no longer in use for Divine Services.

From the courtyard, a stairway leads up to the roof of the Church of St. Mercurius. Half way up this stairway, a passage leads to a door which gives access to the galleries which run round the Church. In these galleries there are five dismantled sanctuaries.

There is good reason to assume that during the Middle Ages the walls of the Upper Church of St. Mercurius with its numerous chapels were either fully or partially adorned with wall paintings.

On the north wall of the northern aisle, there is a painting of the Archangel Michael, who is holding in his right hand a staff and in his left hand an orb. The Angel is clothed in a sticharion with an orarion crossed over his breast and wound around his waist. The painting is

set into an ornamented frame. The colours of the painting are blue, red, brown, yellow and black. The height of the painting is 171 cm., its width is 110 cm. The painting, interestingly enough, shows no traces of intentional damage.

The central niche in the Upper Church of the Holy Virgin is adorned with a very beautiful representation of the Ascension of Christ which, however, shows clearly the transformation which this theme has undergone in the hands of Coptic artists. A horizontal line separates the original Ascension picture into two distinct representations. The upper part of the wall painting shows the enthroned Pantocrator, holding in His left hand the Gospel — the writing has disappeared — and having his right hand raised for the blessing. The lower part represents the Holy Virgin in the centre with her hands raised in the orans position, and surrounded by ten Apostles, five on either side of her.

The similarities of our painting with the famous 6th century wall painting of the Monastery of St. Apollo in Bawît, now in the Coptic Museum, are striking ; and whereas there are some very definite distinctions between these two representations of the same theme, one cannot deny the dependance of our painting upon the Coptic prototype of Bawît.

With regard to the upper part of the painting, we see in both instances a beardless Christ surrounded by an aureole and attended by two angels as well as the two medallions with the sun and the moon. The symbols of the Four Bodiless Living Creatures representing the Four Evangelists are shown on the outer frame of the aureole. In the upper right corner, there is the Eagle representing St. John the Evangelist; in the lower right corner, there is the Ox representing St. Luke the Evangelist; in the lower left corner, there is the Lion representing St. Mark the Evangelist. The painting of the Angel representing St. Matthew the Evangelist is damaged. In the case of the Pantocrator of Bawît, the throne with the prominent royal cushion corresponds to a beautifully decorated early Christian cathedral without a back. On the other hand, our painting shows Christ seated on a wooden chair, which is decorated with fine carvings and the upholstery shows delicate embroidery. The painting of the Pantocrator of Bawît conforms to a rigid and hieratic style, which is seen by the manner in which Christ holds the Gospel. The Christ of our painting, on the other

hand, appears more relaxed with the Gospel resting on His right thigh. The wheels of the celestial chariot (Ez. X : 9-lh), which appear so prominent in the apse-painting of Bawît, are omitted in our painting, although the posture of the two attending angels shows again very definite similarities of the two paintings. The monogramme I H C, which appears to the left of the head of Christ in our painting, is not found in the Bawît painting.

With regard to the lower part of the painting, the Bawît painting portrays the Holy Virgin and Child enthroned in the centre and surrounded by fourteen Apostles. In our painting, the Holy Virgin stands with her hands raised as in the cases of the VIth century Rabbula miniature, though the positions of the hands are more stylized in our painting than in the miniature. In the Bawît painting, the Apostles have pronounced long faces, and their hieratic postures give the appearance of a static rigidity. On the other hand, our painting shows only ten Apostles, with the heads of eight of them turned upwards to Christ. On either side of the Holy Virgin, the third Apostle turns his head away from Christ looking at the other two Apostles. The posture of the Apostles is supposed to demonstrate motion and amazement, though to a lesser degree than in the Rabbula miniature. Nine of the ten Apostles can be identified, and in the case of the three Apostles furthest to the right, the names are still legible. Beginning from the left, the figures represent : St. Thomas, St. Philip, St. Andrew, St. Peter, the Holy Virgin, St. John ?, St. James ?, St. Bartholomew, St. Matthew, and St. Thaddaeus. The arrangement of the Apostles corresponds only partially to that of the painting of Bawît. If we exclude from the painting of Bawît the two saints who do not belong to the Twelve, we discover that St. Bartholomew appears in the painting of Bawît on the left side of the Holy Virgin, whereas in our painting he occupies the position of the third Apostle to the right of the Holy Virgin. St. Matthew appears on the painting of Bawît on the left side of the Holy Virgin, whereas in our painting he stands next to St. Bartholomew.

St. Thomas (only MAC is legible) points with his right hand to Christ. St. Philip turns his head away from Christ. His representation follows the traditional Coptic iconographical typology with black hair and a black beard. St. Andrew, who stands between St. Philip and St. Peter, has his right arm raised and in his left hand

he holds a scroll or a short staff (?). The flaming hair of the Apostle, which is so characteristic in the painting of Bawît, is omitted in our painting. St. Peter (only POC is legible) stands immediately to the left of the Holy Virgin and has his right hand raised in the orans position. In his left hand he holds a key. St. John (?), normally depicted as a young man, is portrayed with a white beard. In his left hand he holds a Gospel and with his right hand he points to the Gospel. The representation of St. James follows the iconographical tradition with dark hair and a dark beard. His left arm is raised while his right hand points to the Holy Virgin. St. Bartholomew (BAP M) has turned his head away from Christ. In his left hand he holds a short staff (?) and with his right hand he points to St. Matthew. St. Matthew (OOIOC) (sic) has both of his arms raised. St. Thaddaeus (TAOO) concludes the Apostolic Assembly. The Apostles are clothed alternately in light and dark vestments.

In the adjacent chapel to the south, the niche is adorned with a monochrome wall painting of the Baptism of Christ. St. John the Baptist is standing on a high rock by the river side and is pouring water on Christ's head. Above, a dove is descending and sending down three rays. At each side is a tree laden with fruit, perhaps pomegranate, and another very curious shrub, possibly an aloe. This painting is of much inferior quality and we must assign it to the late 18th or 19th century.

Butler already noticed that the niche of the Church of St. George above the southern aisle was adorned with a wall painting of Christ in an aureole, holding a Gospel in the left and raising the right hand in benediction. This painting shows the Pantocrator seated on a beautifully carved throne and attended by two angels (?). On the left side of Christ, there is a vertical inscription. MMANOYHA (Immanuel). On the left side of the nimbus, we read the letters I H C, on the right side of the nimbus the letters XC.

In the main Church of St. Mercurius, the two columns on either side of the Royal Doors leading to the central haikal are adorned with paintings. At the occasion of the restoration of the church in 1909 the head architect noticed these paintings, and Mr. de Wiegand, an artist, was commissioned to examine the means to clean these columns. Apparently, however, they were not cleaned. The column paintings were noticed by E.

Loukianoff, who merely remarked that the painting on the northern column was fairly clear.

The painting on the northern column shows Christ. His head is surrounded with a cross-nimbus, and in His left hand, He holds a Gospel, while His right hand is raised for the blessing. The left portion of the face is best preserved. The painting is severely damaged.

The painting on the southern columns shows the Holy Virgin holding the Divine Child in front of her. The nimbus surrounding the head of the Holy Virgin is scarcely visible. The face of the Christchild and the left hand of the Holy Virgin are best preserved.

On the wall of the south-eastern pier of the church, facing the nave, there is a fragment of an equestrian saint.

After leaving the Church of St. Mercurius, the visitor will find, some 20 metres further on, the Church of St. Shenute.

The Church of St. Shenute

The Church of St. Shenute, which is situated about two metres below the present street level, is one of the very ancient churches of Old Cairo.

The church was first mentioned in the year 743 A.D., when an assembly of bishops, clergy and representatives of the people met to elect a new patriarch. In the time of al-Hâkim (996-1021 A.D.), the Muslim call to prayer was made from this church. The church was restored by Patriarch Benjamin II (1327-1339).

At the west end of the nave, the visitor should note the two circular apertures in the floor, which are covered by a stone slab. The first of these apertures is the ancient well of the church, and the second is the Mandatum tank. The nave is separated from the aisles by ten marble columns, five on each side.

In the nave there is an ambon or pulpit of wood with a design of crosses. The ambon stands on eight wooden columns.

The screen of the central sanctuary is red cedar wood, plainly inlaid with a wheel and cross pattern of ivory.

Along the top of this screen is a row of icons, in the centre the Holy Virgin, and on each side three icons each with a pair of Apostles. The sanctuary is apsidal and has a marble tribune. In the niche is a fresco of Christ enthroned.

The southern sanctuary is dedicated to St. Michael, and its screen is of ebony inlaid with sculptured ivory.

The screen of the northern sanctuary which now is no longer in use for Divine Services, is of wood inlaid with ivory.

A flight of steps near the entrance door leads to the Upper Church in which there are three dismantled sanctuaries. At the southwest end of one of these sanctuaries is a baptistery.

The screens from these sanctuaries were removed by order of the Patriarch Cyril V (1854-1861) to the Church of St. Gabriel in the Hârat al-Saqqayin and to the Church of St. Dimiana in Bûlaq. According to Butler (1884), these sanctuaries were dedicated to St. George, St. Philotheus and the Holy Virgin.

As in the case of the Church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus and the Church of St. Mercurius, we may assume that the walls of the upper and lower Church of St. Shenute were fully or partially adorned with wall paintings. The only wall painting, however, which has survived the vicissitudes of the ages is that representing the Holy Virgin and Child and two attending figures angels (?) in the niche of the Upper Church of St. George above the southern aisle. The painting, which shows signs of intentional damage, extends over the full niche, and has a height of 165 cm. and a width of 77 cm. The Holy Virgin with a halo is portrayed standing. Her head is erect and not inclined towards the Child. In her left arm she holds the Child, Who presses His head onto her left shoulder. The artist copied the traditional Byzantine presentation of the Holy Virgin of the 12th-13th century, though the painting lacks beauty, elegance and proportions. This is especially true with regard to

the facial expressions of the Holy Virgin and the Child. The right hand of the Holy Virgin is raised in the orans position. This painting should be assigned to the XIVth century, the time of the restoration of the Church by Benjamin II.

In the main Church of St. Shenute there are two columns, which are adorned with paintings. The second column from the east of the southern row of columns has a painting of a warrior saint or a king (?), facing the nave. The round head without a beard is surrounded by a nimbus, and around his neck he wears a gorget or protective collar. Generally speaking, the armour corresponds to that of a 10th to 11th century warrior of the early Crusades. His left hand rests on the hilt of a double-edged sword. Above his left arm one can see the contour of a helmet (?). In his right hand he holds a sceptre surmounted by a cross (?). The lower portion of the short skirt, which reaches to the knees, is decorated with six horizontal stripes, three of which are white, the others are black. There are no details in the painting, which would determine the identity of the figure. It is possible that the artist portrayed a Christian emperor.

In the southern section of the church there is a single column, which stands between the southern aisle and the western part of the baptistery with the Epiphany tank. The column is adorned with a painting of a bishop in episcopal vestments, who holds in his left hand a staff surmounted by a cross. His head is surrounded by a halo and his face is that of an elderly person with a long beard. E. Loukianoff suggested that the painting represented St. Mark.

The Church of the Holy Virgin, known as al-Damshîriyah

In order to reach this church, the visitor should take the first turning to the left, after passing through the doorway of the monastery.

According to al-Maqrîzî, this church was demolished in 785 A.D., but was rebuilt in the time of the Calif Harûn al-Rashîd (786-809 A.D.).

The visitor should note that the roof covering the nave is wagonvaulted and lofty, whereas that covering the west

end and the northern and southern aisles is low and horizontal.

The screen of the central sanctuary is inlaid with plain ivory, which forms a pattern of squares which enclose crosses. In the centre of the row of icons along the top of this screen is the Holy Virgin, and on each side are three icons, each with a pair of Apostles.

The southern sanctuary is dedicated to St. Michael, and the northern sanctuary is now converted into a shrine of the Holy Virgin Mary.

The name of the church « al-Damshîriyah » originates from the name of a Coptic notable of Damshîr, who undertook the restoration of this church in the course of the 18th century.

The Convent of St. Mercurius

In the lane between the Church of St. Shenute and that of St. Mercurius a little beyond the latter church, a passage leads to the Convent of St. Mercurius (Dair Abû al-Saifain lil-Râhibât). The convent has about forty-five nuns.

This convent has three new churches, which are dedicated to St. Mercurius, the Holy Virgin and to St. Dimiana. Upon entering the convent, one notices a well. The wall painting near the well shows the Samaritan Woman. In the Church of St. Mercurius there are new wall-paintings of the Pantocrator, the Holy Virgin, St. Mercurius and the Crucifixion. The relics of the Patron-Saint are kept in this church. The Church of the Holy Virgin is adorned with wall-paintings of the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Flight into Egypt and the Twelve Apostles. The Church of St. Dimiana is not yet completed, although the mosaic of St. Dimiana and her Forty Virgins is already in situ. The wall-paintings were executed by Isaac Fanus in 1968. In addition, there is a small library of Arabic and Western theological books, including the complete set of the Nicene and Ante-Nicene Fathers.

The Monastery of St. Menas in Old Cairo

The Monastery of St. Menas (Dair Abû Mînâ) is situated in the northern part of Old Cairo (north of the Roman aque-

duct), at the northernmost corner of the Christian cemetery, off Sharia al-Sadd al-Barranî.

According to al-Maqrîzî, the Church of St. Menas was restored in 724 A.D. It has been restored in recent times by the Committee for the Preservation of Arab Art.

A short flight of steps leads down to the west end of the Church of St. Menas. On the right, there is a gate of iron trellis-work which gives access to the tomb of two former priests of this church.

This tomb contains a marble altar at which the Divine Liturgy is celebrated on the anniversaries of their death.

The nave is separated from the aisles by six square pillars of masonry, three on each side, and by four piers. Against the most easterly of the pillars is a marble ambon or pulpit which is supported on twelve columns.

The screen of the central sanctuary is inlaid with plain ivory. The altar-canopy is very lofty and rests on four wooden columns. On the walls of the sanctuary are paintings of saints and prophets.

To the left of this sanctuary, there is a shrine of St. Menas, in which is placed an ornamented bolster containing the relics of St. Behnam and his sister Sarah.

The relics of St. Menas, which were formerly kept in this church, were returned to the Desert Monastery of St. Menas in Mareotis in 1962.

The southern sanctuary is now used as a shrine, in which there are a number of icons. The northern sanctuary is accessible only from the central sanctuary, and it is now used as a sacristy.

From the south end of the choir, a door leads into a long vaulted passage running east and west. At the east end, there is a baptistery. From the baptistery one passes into the Church of St. Behnam.

The Church of St. Behnam

The Church of St. Behnam consists of two sanctuaries, each of which is dedicated to the patron saint. The screen

of the northern sanctuary, which is inlaid with ivory, is relatively modern, having the date of 1813. The screen of the southern sanctuary is somewhat older and bears the date of 1775.

St. Behnam and his sister Sarah were of royal birth. St. Sarah, who suffered from leprosy, was healed, converted and baptized by Matthew the Hermit. The king, their father, persecuted and finally killed his children. Possessed of an evil spirit, the king was also healed by Matthew the Hermit. He and his wife became Christians and dedicated a church to their martyred children.

The Upper Church of St. George

A stairway leads up to the Church of St. George which has two sanctuaries. The southern sanctuary is dedicated to St. George and its screen is dated 1747 A.D. The northern sanctuary is now used as a shrine of St. George, which contains an icon of the Saint together with some of his relics. In the northern sanctuary there is a low door which gives access to an ancient crypt with a vaulted roof.

Lit. : Butler, A., *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*. 2 vols. Oxford, 1884.
Burmester, O. H. E. KHS-, *A Guide to the Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo*. Cairo, 1955.

4. — THE COPTIC CHURCHES TO THE SOUTH OF OLD CAIRO

The Church of the Holy Virgin
« By Babylon of the Steps »

The ancient Coptic churches south of Old Cairo and Babylon can be reached most conveniently by travelling along Sharia Athar al-Nabî (parallel to the corniche) turning afterwards to the left, crossing the Cairo-Helwân railway tracks.

The Church of the Holy Virgin is situated south of the Castle of Babylon and is surrounded by a wall of grey brick some 10 metres high. A flight of steps leads down to the enclosure, which is a sign that the surrounding ground level

has risen considerably since the time when the church was built.

> According to A.J. Butler, the church was built at a time when the circuit wall of the city of Babylon was still standing. The first mention of this church, however, appears to be that made by Ibn Duqmâq (1400 A.D.) in his *Description de l'Egypte.*

The plan of this church nearly approaches a square. The church consists of a narthex, nave, choir, northern and southern aisles and three sanctuaries. The narthex has two baptisteries, one on the left with a small font, and one on the right with a very large font.

> This latter baptistery is used for the service of the general baptism of infants which is performed on the Sunday preceding Palm Sunday. This service is mainly for those infants whose parents cannot afford a private baptism.

The screen of the central sanctuary is of wood inlaid with ivory with a cross in a square pattern. Along the top of the screen there is the usual row of icons.

The northern sanctuary is dedicated to the Holy Virgin. Its screen is of wood, but has no icons.

The southern sanctuary is now used as a shrine. It has a trellis-work wooden screen. The shrine is adorned with several old icons of the Holy Virgin, St. Dimiana, St. Stephen, St. Antony, St. Paul the Hermit, St. Barbara, St. Shenute, and SS. Peter and Paul. Two bolsters are said to contain the relics of St. Dimiana.

The Monastery of St. Theodore the Eastern

In close proximity to the Church of the Holy Virgin «by the Steps of Babylon» is situated the Monastery of St. Theodore the Eastern, which contains two churches, one of which is dedicated to SS. Cyrus and John and the other to St. Theodore. Both of these churches are mentioned by Ibn Duqmâq.

The Church of SS. Cyrus and John

A door in the circuit wall of this monastery gives access to a courtyard, whence a short passage leads into a second small courtyard in which is situated on the right the Church of SS. Cyrus and John. The church has three haikals, all of which are a step higher than the choir. They have a continuous screen.

The central sanctuary is covered with a dome, and in the east wall there is the usual niche with a painting of the Pantocrator.

The southern sanctuary is dedicated to St. Barsum the Naked. Its screen is of wood and has no icons. In the southern aisle there is a shrine with numerous icons. On a shelf are ornamented bolsters which contain the relics of SS. Cyrus and John.

The northern sanctuary is dedicated to SS. Cyrus and John. Its screen is of wood and it has no icons. On its door is inscribed the date 1563 A.D.

The Church of St. Theodore

The Church of St. Theodore is situated on the left of the courtyard, and was redecorated in the beginning of the 20th century. The Church of St. Theodore has three haikals.

The narthex, which is separated from the nave by a wooden trellis-work screen, has at its south end the baptistery. The nave, which contains an ambon or pulpit, is covered by three domes painted in a pale green colour. The central sanctuary which is one step higher than the choir, has a wooden screen inlaid with ivory.

The northern sanctuary is dedicated to the Holy Virgin. The northern aisle is separated from the nave by a lattice-work screen adorned with numerous icons.

In the northern aisle there is a shrine with icons, beneath which on a shelf is an ornamented bolster containing some of the relics of St. Theodore. On the left

wing there is another bolster containing some of the relics of St. George. Above the screen of the northern sanctuary is an ancient icon of St. Theodore and also at the side an icon of Christ as a child and an icon of Christ before Pilate.

The northern sanctuary is no longer used for Divine Services, but in it the Holy Communion is administered to women.

Lit. : Butler, A., *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt.* 2 vols. Oxford, 1884.
Burmester, O. H. E., KHS-, *A Guide to the Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo.* Cairo, 1955.
Vollers, *Description de l'Egypte par Ibn Duqmâq.* V, 107, Cairo, 1893.

5. — THE COPTIC CHURCHES IN GREATER CAIRO

The Church of the Virgin in the Hârat Zuwaila

The Church of the Virgin in the Hârat Zuwaila or al-'Adhrâ bi Hârat Zuwaila is situated in the north-east district of Cairo, known as Khurunfish, off the Bain al-Sûrain Street. The Lower Church is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Upper Church to St. George. To the north-west corner of the Lower Church is annexed the Church of St. Mercurius. Close by, there is also the Convent of nuns of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary was probably founded in the 10th century. It is mentioned in connection with the appointment of a new bishop of Cairo, which took place during the patriarchate of Macarius II (1102-1128). It was also among the churches demolished in the year 1131, but was later rebuilt. From the 14th century to 1660, this church served as patriarchal church.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Lower Church :

The church lies about 5 metres below the present street level, and the entrance to it is through the southern aisle. It comprises a narthex, nave, choir and three sanctuaries.

The nave is separated from the narthex and the northern and southern aisles by three rows of ancient marble columns. The marble ambon is supported on four twisted columns. Across the choir, a beam, on which there is affixed a modern painting of the Last Supper, runs into a pier of masonry on either side.

The screen of the central sanctuary is of ebony inlaid with ivory.

Over the sanctuary rises a lofty dome ornamented with gated pendentives. The altar canopy is a dome supported on four marble columns. In the apse there is a fine tribune rising in six marble steps. In the centre is the synthronus.

The southern sanctuary is dedicated to the Archangel Gabriel, and its screen is inlaid with ivory. Along the top of this screen are seven ancient icons which represent :

The Annunciation, the Nativity, the Baptism, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

In the floor before this sanctuary is a well, the water of which is used for healing the sick. According to tradition, the water of the well was blessed by Christ on the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt. Every year, Ethiopian priests come to the church to take water from this well.

A door on the right of the southern sanctuary gives access to a shrine in which there are several famous icons.

On the southern side of the shrine is a 14th century icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Regarding the miracles associated with this icon, it is reported that whenever Patriarch Matthew I (1378-1408) fell into temptation, he would then stand in front of the icon, addressing it in supplication as if it were a person. It was then that the Holy Virgin would appear to him, and his burdens would be lightened, his problems solved and his soul comforted. Also St. Ruwais is said to have prayed before this icon. The icon shows the Blessed Virgin Mary seated on a tree which shoots forth from the back of Jesse (Is. 11 : 1-10) and around her are the four major and the twelve minor prophets, and above them two angels.

At the east end of the northern aisle are two sanctuaries, the screens of which are inlaid with ivory. The first sanctu-

ary is dedicated to the Archangel Michael, and its screen is dated 1495 A.M. or 1778-1779 A.D. In the east wall of the sanctuary there is the usual niche.

The second sanctuary is dedicated to St. John the Baptist. At the west end of the church there is a shrine. In the centre there is an icon of the Crucifixion, on the right, the Baptism of Christ, and on the left, the Blessed Virgin. A doorway in the north-west corner of the northern aisle gives access to the church of St. Mercurius.

The Church of St. Mercurius

This Church was built by a certain Coptic notable named al-Mu'allim Ibrâhîm al-Gawharî in the year 1490 A.M. or 1773-1774 A.D. It comprises a nave, choir, northern and southern aisles, three sanctuaries and a baptistery. The nave is covered with a dome, and the central sanctuary with a semi-dome. In the nave there is an ambon, supported on six wooden columns.

> On the west wall of the nave are the following icons: St. Panteleemon, St. Theodore, St. Mercurius, St. Iskhiron, and a large painting depicting scenes from the Passion of Christ.

The aisles are separated from the nave by six columns, three on each side. The screen of the central sanctuary is of wood inlaid with ivory, and along the top of it there is a row of icons. The altar is covered with a canopy which is borne on four marble columns. Behind the altar is a marble tribune with five steps, and in the east wall there is the usual niche. There is nothing to indicate to whom either the northern or the southern sanctuary is dedicated.

The Church of St. George

The Upper Church is dedicated to St. George. It is very small and comprises a nave and three sanctuaries. Outside this church there is a small chamber which contains a shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Behind the latticed screen there is an icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary together with icons of Saints.

The Convent of Nuns of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Annexed to the Church of the Holy Virgin Mary of the Hârat Zuwaila is a Convent of Nuns which was built by the Patriarch Cyril V (1854-1861). The forty nuns have a chapel in the gallery on the north side of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This chapel could be used as a sanctuary if, through an exceptionally high level of the Nile at the annual inundation, the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary was flooded with water.

The Churches of the Virgin and of St. George in the Hârat al-Rûm

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is situated at the end of a lane leading off the Sharia Sukkariyah in the Muskî district in the vicinity of al-Azhar University.

> It was probably founded in the 10th century, but it has been several times demolished and rebuilt. Abû Sâlih states that the church was among those closed or demolished in the reign of al-Hâkim (996-1021). From 1660 to 1799, this church was the Patriarchal Church in Cairo. The present edifices date from the time of Muhammad Alî.

On entering this church, one should note the roof, which is formed of twelve domes, one over each of the three sanctuaries, and nine over the rest of the church. The choir is separated from the nave by five piers. To the northern pier of the choir is attached a wooden ambon.

The screen of the central sanctuary is inlaid with ivory. Along the top is the usual row of icons. The altar is of marble.

The southern sanctuary is dedicated to the Four Bodiless Living Creatures of the Apocalypse, and the northern sanctuary to St. Marina. A door to the right of the southern sanctuary gives access to a long passage. In a recess, to the left, there is the ancient baptistery, and at the end of the passage is the modern baptistery.

One floor above the ground, and close to the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but not directly over, is the Church of St. George, which has the same twelve-domed roofing as the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Close by the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Convent of Nuns of St. Theodore, which has three shrines and a very fine reception room.

The Old Cathedral of St. Mark at Azbakiyah

The old Cathedral of St. Mark is situated at Sharia al-Kanisah al-Murqusiyah in the Azbakiyah district of Cairo. One approaches the cathedral through a courtyard, which is flanked by the Coptic College on the north and the former Patriarchal residence and offices on the south.

> The first church was erected in this place in the year 1800 A.D. ; when the seat of the Patriarch was transferred hither by the Patriarch Mark VIII (1796-1809) from the Church of the Holy Virgin Mary at Hârat al-Rûm. The present building was begun by the Patriarch Cyril IV (1854-61) and was finished during the pontificate of the Patriarch Demetrius (1961-70).

The Church is built in the style of Greek Orthodox churches of the period, and its interior decoration resembles that of a Greek Orthodox church. The northern and southern aisles are separated from the nave by lofty marble columns. The ambon, which is attached to one of these columns, on the north side, is reached by a spiral staircase. The sanctuary screen is decorated with an iconostasis. Behind the square altar of the sanctuary there is a tribune with a synthronus.

The visitor should especially note the superb ancient lectern, which formerly belonged to the Church of St. Sergius in Babylon.

The Church of St. Stephen

To the north of the Patriarchal Church of St. Mark is the Church of St. Stephen. It was built during the pontificate of the Patriarch Mark VIII (1796-1809).

The church comprises a nave, choir and one sanctuary. The sanctuary-screen is of wood inlaid with plain ivory. Along the top of the screen there is a row of icons, in the centre of which is the Crucifixion.

On the south side of this church there is a door which gives access to a mortuary chapel in which there are interred the bodies of the following patriarchs : Cyril IV (110th Patr.), Demetrius II (111th Patr.), Cyril V (112th Patr.), John XIX (113th Patr.), Macarius III (114th Patr.), Joseph II (115th Patr.).

On the north side of this church a door opens into the baptistery in which there are two fonts. The basin of the larger font is used for adult baptisms.

The Izbawiya

The Izbawiya is an urban dependency of the Monastery of the Syrians, which is situated in the close proximity of the old Coptic Patriarchate, in the Azbakiyah section of Cairo.

The Izbawiya was built by Qummus Maksîmûs Salîb (1895-1939), to serve as an episcopal residence, as a home for sick monks and novices and as a church for the people of the vicinity. The Izbawiya is a two-storey building. On the ground floor are the guest rooms, the first story has a prayer room with numerous icons and pictures of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, the second story has a church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, built by Anbâ Tawfîlus, bishop of the monastery. A baptistery was installed in 1956.

Opposite the main gate of the Izbawiya there is a waqf of the Monastery of St. Paul, while the Monastery of St. Macarius maintains a waqf east of the Izbawiya.

The Church of SS. Peter and Paul at Abbasiyah

The Church of SS. Peter and Paul at Abbasiyah is situated at Sharia Ramses next to the Coptic Archaeological Society and near the Coptic Institute and the Coptic Theological Seminary.

The church was built in 1911 over the tomb of Butrus Ghalî Pasha, ex-Prime Minister, by the members of his family. It is one of the finest examples of modern Coptic ecclesiastical architecture. It is constructed entirely of dressed stone, and the mural paintings are the work of Pirmo Pancciroli of Rome, and the mosaics are by Angelo of Venice.

This church comprises a nave, choir, northern and southern aisles, a confessio, two sanctuaries and a baptistery. The aisles are separated from the nave by ten marble columns, five on each side. There are three entrance doors at the 'west end, and three entrance doors on both the north and south sides of the church.

In the nave, one should note the mural paintings above the arches which separate the nave from the aisles. On the right, from west to east, there is St. Matthew, the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Flight into Egypt, the Multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the Entry into Jerusalem, and St. Luke. On the left, from west to east, there is St. Mark, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and St. John.

Against the pier on the north of the sanctuary there is a fine marble ambon, and before the sanctuary there is the Confessio.

Above the door which gives access to the tomb of Butrus Ghalî Pasha, there are, inscribed in Arabic and French, the dates of the deceased : May 12th, 1846... February 21st, 1910. Within the crypt there is a granite sarcophagus mounted on a base of black granite, which contains the remains of Butrus Ghalî Pasha, and to the left of it are the tombs of his eldest son Nagib Ghalî Pasha and of his widow. On the north and south sides of the sarcophagus there are written in Arabic and French, the last words of the deceased : « God knows that I did no harm to my country ».

The altar of the sanctuary is of marble, and is supported on four white marble columns.

Round the border of the semidome above the sanctuary there is inscribed in Coptic and Arabic : «Glory to God in the heights», and in the semidome itself there

is a beautiful mosaic depicting Christ as Pantocrator, seated on a throne, having on His right the Holy Virgin Mary, and on His left, Saint Mark. Below, there is St. Paul the Hermit, St. Cyril, St. Athanasius and St. Antony.

On the wall of the southern aisle there are two rows of mural paintings.

In the upper row there is depicted Christ and the Ten Virgins, and in the lower row there are the following paintings; east to west : the Archangel Michael, the Patriarch Isaac, St. Thaddaeus, St. Andrew, St. Bartholomew, St. James, St. Simon and the Archangel Raphael.

At the east end of this aisle there is the baptistery, on the south wall of which are the following paintings :

St. Onuphrius, St. Menas, St. Peter, and over the doorway, the Patriarch Jacob. In a niche behind the font there is a mosaic depicting the Baptism of Christ by St. John the Baptist. On the north wall there is a painting of the Transfiguration.

On the wall of the northern aisle there are two rows of mural paintings.

In the upper row there is depicted St. Dimiana and her Forty Virgins, and in the lower row there are the following paintings, east to west : the Archangel Gabriel, St. John, St. James, the son of Zebedee, St. Matthew, St. Thomas, St. Philip, the Archangel Suriel, and the Patriarch Abraham.

At the east end of this aisle there is the sanctuary of the Holy Virgin Mary. Behind the altar, there is a mosaic of the Holy Virgin Mary and the Child. On the north wall there is a painting of St. Paul, and on the south wall a painting depicting the widow of Butrus Ghalî Pasha presenting the church through an Angel to the Mother of God, with St. Anne on one side, and St. Elizabeth on the other side. Further on, there are paintings of St. Barbara and St. Mary the Egyptian. Over the door there is a painting of King David.

The Church of St. Ruwais at Abbasiyah

The Church of St. Ruwais comprises a nave, choir and two sanctuaries, which are covered by two domes.

On the north wall of the church there are the following icons : St. Ruwais, St. Antony, St. Paul the Hermit, and the three Macarii. A single screen serves for all the three sanctuaries. Above the door of the central sanctuary there is a Rood which has on its western face a painting of the Crucifixion, and on its eastern face, one of the Resurrection. Along the top of the screen there is a row of icons of St. George, St. Michael, St. Philip, St. Thomas, St. James, St. Bartholomew, St. Simon, St. Matthew, St. Peter, St. John, St. Matthias, St. Thaddaeus, St. Andrew, St. John, St. James and St. Apoli.

The southern sanctuary is used as gynaikion.

From the northern sanctuary which is no longer used for Divine Service, eight steps lead down to the tomb of St. Ruwais.

The Tomb of St. Ruwais

At the bottom of the steps, on the left, there is a tomb which contains the body of St. Sulaiman, a companion of St. Ruwais. Opposite to this tomb is a doorway which gives access to a crypt situated directly beneath the central sanctuary of the church above. On the right of this doorway there is a modern icon of St. Ruwais and his companion St. Sulaiman. Within the crypt, which was restored in 1949 A.D., is the Tomb of St. Ruwais.

On the sarcophagus there is inscribed in Arabic : «Here reposeth in the Lord, the Saint, the righteous Anbâ Farîg, known as Anbâ Rûwais. He fell asleep on Friday the 21st of Babah in the year 1121 A.M. which corresponds to the 18th of October, 1404 A.D.».

In this crypt there are also buried the following patriarchs : Matthew I, 87th Patriarch (1378-1408 A.D.), John XI, 89th Patriarch (1428-1453 A.D.), Matthew II, 90th Patriarch (1453-1465 A.D.), and Gabriel VI, 91st Patriarch (1466-1474 A.D.).

Reference to this church is made by al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) as being situated near the Christian burial ground

of al-Khandaq. Recently, the bones found around the church have been removed to a new cemetery.

Lit. : Burmester, O.H.E. KHS-, *A Guide to the Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo*, Cairo, 1955.

The new Cathedral of St. Mark

On July 24, 1965, President Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser laid the foundation stone of the new Cathedral of St. Mark at Sharia Ramses in Abbasiyah. On the occasion of the 1900th anniversary of the martyrdom of the Evangelist St. Mark and the translation of his relics from Venice to Cairo, the new Cathedral was inaugurated. The cathedral is one of the largest churches in Africa and measures 100 m. in length and 36 m. in width. The central dome has a height of 55 m. The two bell-towers are 85 m. high. The seating capacity is for 5,000 people.

Seven steps lead to the choir. The cathedral has three altars. The centre altar is dedicated to St. Mark the Evangelist, the northern altar to St. Menas and the southern altar to the Holy Virgin. The two latter altars are built of Egyptian alabaster. The centre altar, a gift of the Russian Orthodox Church, is of gilded metal adorned with light blue, dark blue and white crosses. The high reliefs on the walls of the altar represent the Mystical Supper, the Passion of Christ, the Entombment and Gethsemane. The octagonal wooden chalice ark on the altar has carvings of the Mystical Supper, St. George, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, St. Mark, the Holy Mandylion, the Good Shepherd and the Holy Virgin and Child.

When the new iconostasis had not been delivered, the iconostasis of the former Church of the Holy Virgin at Anbâ Ruwais was temporarily installed.

The row of icons represent St. George, St. Luke, St. John the Baptist, St. Gabriel, the Holy Virgin, Christ, St. Michael, the Nativity, St. Mark and St. Mercurius. Above the Royal Doors, there is an icon of the Resurrection, and above that, the Twelve Apostles and the Mystical Supper.

The ground floor of the cathedral includes the Shrine with the relics of St. Mark, which repose in a pink Aswân

granite block. The walls of this shrine are adorned with wall paintings of the martyrdom of St. Mark in Alexandria, St. Mark the Evangelist, and the translation of the relics of the Evangelist from Venice to Cairo in 1908. These wall paintings were executed by Isaac Fanûs and Mansûr Farag in 1969. West of this shrine and below the high altar, there is the mausoleum of Cyril VI, 116th Successor of St. Mark. The relics of Cyril VI repose in a grey marble tomb. On the walls there are numerous large pictures showing important episodes in the life and pontificate of Cyril VI.

The four bells in the campanile were made in Venice and are adorned with high reliefs depicting Cyril VI, the Holy Virgin and Child, St. Mark and St. Michael.

The Church of St. Michael in the Khandaq

The Church of St. Michael, known also as the Monastery of St. Michael, the Northern, was rebuilt in 1894 by Ibrahîm Bey Meleka al-Wahabî on the site of the ancient Coptic Monastery of St. George in the Khandaq. The Khandaq, the drain or ditch, was situated outside the city walls of mediaeval Cairo. Nowadays, the church occupies a site near Sharia Misr wa'l Sudân in the district of Abbasiyah, at some distance behind the Coptic Orthodox Theological Seminary.

The Church of St. Michael with its two belfries has one central haikal which is dedicated to the Archangel, the southern and the northern haikals have no altars. The iconostasis is of the Syro-Byzantine type. The baptistery is situated to the south of the church and is adorned with an icon of the Baptism of Christ of 1846 (1562 A.M.) and numerous modern Greek prints. A shrine of St. Michael is at the western end of the church. An oratory, dedicated to the Patron Saint is situated on the northern side of the church with icons of St. Michael, St. George and the Holy Virgin.

On the north, west and south outside walls there are six marble slabs, each of which has engraved on it the Lord's Prayer and the dedication of the church in the following

languages. North wall : English and French ; west wall : Coptic and Arabic ; south wall : Greek and Russian.

In addition to the church, there is a clinic with office and consulting rooms in the north-west corner of the churchyard.

During the patriarchate of Christodoulus (1047-1078), the Monastery at the Khandaq was an episcopal see of some importance. Solomon, the King of Nubia, visited Cairo in 1080 and was buried in the Monastery of St. George at the Khandaq. During the patriarchate of Cyril II (1078-1092) there were numerous churches at the Khandaq, some of which were not being used. Thus, Gabriel, Bishop of the Khandaq, granted the Church of St. Paul, the son of Justus the Martyr, to the Syrian Jacobites. At the same time, the Armenians obtained a Church of St. George at the Khandaq. The Khandaq remained an episcopal see until the 14th century. It is said that at least twelve churches were situated in the Khandaq.

The only archaeological remains of this distinguished Christian site are : a red granite column, a capital and fragments of a pillar. These objects are in the northern part of the church yard.

The Church of the Holy Virgin in Zamalek

The Church of the Holy Virgin (al-'Adhrâ) at Sharia Mar'ashli and Sharia Muhammad Habib Pasha in Zamalek is one of the most modern Coptic Churches in Egypt. Those who are interested in modern Coptic art and architecture should not fail to visit this beautiful church.

The architect, Mr. Ramses Wissa Wassef, designed the church in a modernistic Coptic style.

The Church, which was completed in 1960, has three haikals. The central haikal is dedicated to the Holy Virgin, the northern haikal to St. Michael, and the southern haikal to St. George. The stained-glass windows represent the Miracles of Christ. The window above the central altar shows the Pantocrator and the Agnus Dei underneath. The icons

of the haikal-screen are the work of Yûsuf Frances and Samuel Henry.

The baptistery is situated south of the nave and is also decorated with modernistic stained-glass windows.

The Church of St. George in Heliopolis

The Church of St. George in Heliopolis is situated at Sharia 'Abd al-'Aziz Fahmy. The church, which is built in Byzantine style according to the model of St. Sophia in Istanbul, has a large dome surmounting the nave. There are twelve stained-glass windows in the dome showing among other themes the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, the Holy Virgin and Child and St. Mark. Above the entrance there is a stained-glass window portraying St. George.

The church, which was constructed by Wissa Wassef, has three haikals, which are dedicated to the Holy Virgin (north), St. George (centre) and St. Menas (south). The baptistery is situated in a separate room in the southern part of the church and the baptismal font is constructed of alabaster. The stained-glass window shows the Baptism of Christ.

The oratory on the south side is dedicated to the Holy Virgin. Noteworthy is the icon of the Holy Virgin of Kykko, Cyprus. The oratory on the north side, which is dedicated to St. George, is adorned with two icons of St. Michael and St. George.

The foundation stone for the building of the church was laid in 1952. However, the work was interrupted for several years, and finally resumed in 1957.

The Church of the Holy Virgin at Zaitûn

This church, built in 1925 by Khalîl Ibrâhîm Pasha for his family, has attracted large numbers of pilgrims, both Christians and Muslims, ever since the first apparition of the Holy Virgin on April 2, 1968. For several weeks in 1968 and

1969 thousands of pilgrims assembled every night in front of this church in anticipation of the apparition of the Holy Virgin in bright light, blue or orange, on the dome or in one of the windows of the northeastern cupola of the church. Many healing miracles are said to have taken place in conjunction with the apparition.

The church is situated at Sharia Tûmân Bey, Zeitûn. Following the apparitions, the church has been renovated and enlarged in order to serve as a pilgrimage centre. To the west of the church, a new roofed hall adorned with wall-paintings of St. Mark, Cyril VI, the Flight into Egypt, the Via Dolorosa, the Ascension, the Holy Virgin of Zaitûn, and the Healing of the Blind (painted by S. Antûn in 1970) provides shelter for pilgrims.

THE OTHER COPTIC CHURCHES IN GREATER CAIRO

'Abdîn

The Church of St. Gabriel (1855) Hârat al-Saqqâyîn (this church was built by Mikhâîl Bey Shârûbîm, Sa'ad Bey 'Abdû, Shanûdah Bey Bakhûm, Shanûdah Bey Bûlus, Qummus Girgis Butrus and Qummus Bûlus Girgis).

'Ain Shams

The Church of St. George (1936) al-Matariyah.

Al-Darb al-Ahmar

The Church of the Holy Virgin (1100) Hârat al-Rûm.

Al-Azbakiyah

The Church of St. George (1924) Sharia al-Qulalî ; the Church of the Holy Virgin (1884) Sharia al-Wazîr 'Alâa al-Dîn (this church was built by Yûhannâ Gâd, Damian Bey Gâd and Mikhâîl Gâd).

Al-Wâylî

The Church of St. George (1926) Manshîyat al-Sadr (this church was built by Qummus Kîrillus Mattâ) ; the Church of the Holy Virgin (1940) ; the Church of St. Mercurius (1955) Ezbet Mansûr ; the Church of St. Michael (1892) Hâdayiq al-Qubbah ; the Church of St. John the Baptist (1948) Sharia al-Gabal al-Ahmar (this church was built by Nicholas Greiss) ; the Church of the Holy Virgin, Ezbet al-Qusayyarin ; the Church of St. George, Zawiyah al-Hamra ; the Church of the Holy Virgin, Amiriyah.

Al-Sahl

The Church of St. George (1935) Sharia Khumarawaîh; the Church of SS. Mercurius and Dimiana (1936) Ard Râîf; the Church of St. Dimiana (1950) Ard Bâbâ Dublû (this church was built by Qummus 'Abd al-Masîh Shirbînî, Dr. Helmy Makârî, Joseph Makârî and Wîssâ Demetrius); the Church of the Holy Virgin and the Angel (1956) Ard Sherîf; the Church of St. Mark (1953) Minyet al-Sîrîq (the church was built by the Coptic Orthodox Society for the Propagation of the Holy Scriptures).

Bâb al-Sha'rîyah

The Church of St. George (1939), 31 Sikket al-Dâher (this church was built by Anbâ Yû'annis XIX and Anbâ Tûmâ, Bishop of Tanta).

Bulâq

The Church of St. Dimiana (1910) Sharia al-Adawiyah.

Heliopolis

The Church of St. Mark (1925) Sharia Cleopatra ; the Church of St. George (1935) Almâzah ; the Church of St. Menas, Sh. Ibrâhîm Luqa ; the Church of St. George, Sh. Saud ; the Church of St. George, Sh. al-Alf Maskan; the Church of the Holy Virgin, Madinat Nasr.

Ma'âdi

The Church of St. Mark, the Church of the Holy Virgin, the Church of St. Raphael, the Church of St. George, Tura.

Helwân

The Church of St. George, the Church of the Holy Virgin.

Faggalah

The Church of the Holy Virgin, Sh. Kamel Sidki.

Zâhir

The Church of St. Michael, the Church of St. George.

Matariya

The Church of the Holy Virgin (1950) Ezbet al-Nakhl; the Church of St. George (1957) Manshiyat al-Tahrîr; the Church of the Holy Virgin (1952) 4 Sharia al-Muq'ad; the Church of St. George (1957) Sharia al-Masâkin al-Sha'biyah.

Rod al-Farag

The Church of St. George (1936) 58 Sharia Gazîrat Badrân; the Church of the Holy Virgin (1941) Sharia 'Ayâd Bey; the Church of St. Michael (1956) Sharia 'Ayâd Bey (this church was built by Mr. Yûnân Nakhlah of al-Mahabbah); the Church of the Holy Virgin (1942) Sharia Masarrah; the Church of St. Michael (1952) Sharia Tusun; the Church of the Holy Virgin (1948) Sharia al-Karkî ; the Church of St. Michael (1953) Sharia Ghâlî ; the Church of St. Shenute, Sh. Ayâd Bey ; the Church of the Holy Virgin, Rod al-Farag; the Church of St. Mark, Rod al-Farag.

Shûbra

The Church of St. Menas, 37 Sharia al-Tur'ah al-Bûlâqiyah; the Church of St. Antony, Sharia al-Khargî; the Church of St. George (1938) Sharia al-Guyûsh ; the Church of the Holy Virgin (1944) Sharia al-Wugûh; the Church of the Holy Virgin (1924) Sharia Mahmashah; the Church of St. Barbara (1943) Sharia al-Sharâbiyah; the Church of SS. George and Sarapamon (1948) Ezbet al-Ward ; the Church of the Holy Virgin, Sh. Hafezia, the Church of St. George, Sh. Abû Taqiyah; the Church of St. Mark, Sh. al-Guyûsh; the Church of St. Mark, Sh. Khumarawaîh; the Church of St. Dimiana, Babadublo; the Church of the Holy Virgin, Ezbet Qusayyarîn; the Church of St. George, Wayli al-Kebîr, Abû Lailah.

Zaitûn

The Church of St. George, Ain Shams; the Church of the Holy Virgin, Matariyah; the Church of the Holy Virgin, Midan al-Tahrir, Matariyah; the Church of St. Dimiana, Matariyah; the Church of St. George, Medinet al-Nur, Matariyah ; the Church of St. Timothy (1957) Zaitûn ; the Church of St. John (1940) Hilmîyat al-Zaitûn.

The Cathedral of St. George in Gizah

The diocese of Gizah includes thirty churches, of which the most important church is the Cathedral of St. George, which was dedicated in 1956. The central altar is dedicated to the equestrian warrior-saint, the northern altar to the Holy Virgin. To the south of the main altar there is a prayer chapel.

The wall paintings in this cathedral were executed by E.R. Ayad. The central apse is adorned with a large painting of the twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse and the Pantocrator. The northern wall has paintings representing SS. Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Suriel as well as SS. Mark, George, Menas and Theodore. On the southern wall there are the paintings of SS. John the

Baptist, Antony, Paul the Theban, Macarius, Pachomius, Domitius, Maximus, Cyril I and Athanasius. On the west wall, there are paintings of SS. Dimiana and Barbara. Noteworthy is the beautifully carved iconostasis, a copy of a 5th century model in the Coptic Museum. The stained glass windows represent themes of the Old and the New Testaments.

6. — THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCHES

The Cathedral of St. Nicholas

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Nicholas is situated at 9, Sharia al-Azhar, Hamzâwî. Next to the Cathedral is the residence of the Bishop of Heliopolis and the Patriarchal offices.

According to the 15th cent. Islamic historian al-Maqrîzî, the Melkites possessed at Cairo the Church of St. Nicholas near the Archers. An archery was erected by Baybars outside the Gate of Victory, and since the Bab al-Nasr is not very far from the Hamzâwî, it would have been in the Greek Quarter. It is very likely that the present cathedral was built up on the site of the former church with the same dedication.

Like all Greek Orthodox Churches, the Cathedral of St. Nicholas is beautifully adorned with many icons and wall paintings. The Cathedral has three altars, which are dedicated to Christ the Saviour (north), St. Nicholas (centre) and the Passion of Christ (south). The baptistery is situated at the southern side of the church. Here, there are 36 ancient icons, which at one time belonged to an iconostasis. The icons on the iconostasis represent from north to south : St. John the Theologian dictating the Apocalypse, the three hierarchs (SS. Basil, Gregory and Chrysostom), the Transfiguration, St. Mark, St. Nicholas, the Holy Virgin, Christ, St. John the Baptist, the Holy Virgin with eleven Apostles, St. John the Almoner, St. Athanasius, St. Cyril, the Annunciation and Pentecost.

The wall paintings represent : North wall : St. Charalampos, St. Catherine, the Ascension, the Footwashing, the Empty Tomb, Doubting Thomas and the Descent from the Cross. West wall : St. Spyridon, St. Tryphon, SS. George and Demetrius, SS. Constantine and Helena, St. Marcella and St. Sophronius. South wall : The Sama-

ritan woman, the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, the Nativity of Christ, Gethsemane, the Baptism of Christ, the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, and the Unmercenary Saints of the Church.

The patriarchal throne is situated in the choir on the northern side, whereas the ambon is situated on the southern side. The very beautiful silver lamp-holders hanging from the ceiling of the nave should be noted.

The Church of SS. Constantine and Helena

This church, which is situated in a large courtyard, off Sharia al-Galâa, Bulâq, is one of the principal and most beautiful Greek Orthodox Churches in Cairo. Construction of the church began in December 1906, yet it was not until May 1914 that the church was consecrated. The cost was largely defrayed by Nestor Gianaclis, a wealthy industrialist of Alexandria.

On entering the courtyard, one should note at the south-east corner the ornate and lofty belfry. The nave of the church is separated from the side aisles by arcades which support a gallery running round the whole church. The large single dome is decorated with a painting of the Pantocrator, and round it there is in large letters of gold the text of *John* VIII, 12. On each of the pendentives there is painted one of the four Evangelists. On the south, north and west walls above the gallery there are brightly coloured paintings of the Baptism, the Nativity and the Resurrection respectively. On the arch above the iconostasis there is a painting of the Mystical Supper, and on the upper part of the wall of the apse there is a large painting of the Holy Virgin as Supplicant. In the northern and southern alcoves above the iconostasis there are paintings of St. Gerasimus and St. Catherine respectively. Along the top of the iconostasis there is a row of icons depicting the Feasts of the Church Year. In the middle of these icons there is an ambon which is surmounted by a Rood. The two large icons of Christ and the Holy Virgin on the iconostasis are surrounded by small icons depicting various Saints. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in a very beautiful silver Artophorion which has the form of a *kouvouklion*. This stands in the centre of the Altar above which there is a carved wooden canopy. This church has three

sanctuaries, the central being dedicated to SS. Constantine and Helena, the southern to St. Nestor, and the northern to St. Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria. Both the southern and the northern sanctuaries are provided with iconostases.

The Church of St. Michael and St. Gabriel

This church, which is situated at Sharia al-Zahîr, Ghamra, belongs to the Arabophone or Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox Community. The church was built in 1931 on the site of the former Lutfallah Palace, and was redecorated in 1962.

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Catherine

The principal Dependency and Archiepiscopal Residence of the Monastery of St. Catherine is situated in Sharia Tûr Sina and Midân al-Zâhir in the district of al-Zâhir. Those planning to visit the Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai were obliged to call at the dependency to obtain the necessary visiting permit.

In addition to the Archiepiscopal Residence, the offices and the monastery cells, the dependency has in its northeastern part a church which is dedicated to St. Catherine. The church is an oblong construction with bare painted walls. From the ceiling which is painted with stars there hang a number of small lamps.

The iconostasis is adorned with icons of St. John the Baptist, the Holy Virgin, Christ and St. Catherine and dates from 1922. Above the Royal Entrance, there is an icon of the Transfiguration.

The Russian Church of St. Nicholas

The Church of St. Nicholas is situated at 12, Sharia Abû Simbel, Heliopolis, and is the chapel of the White Russian Old Peoples Home. The church was built in 1958, after the former Church of St. Nicholas at 'Ataba Square in Cairo (founded in 1920 by the Ukrainian priest Nidielkoff) and the former Church of St. Nicholas at Alexandria (founded in

1914 by Petroff, the Imperial Consul at Alexandria) were dismantled.

The Church of St. Nicholas belongs to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria. The sanctuary is adorned by approximately 300 icons of the various sizes. The principal icons represent St. Vladimir, St. Catherine, St. Sergius, St. Alexander Nevsky, St. Pantelemon, St. Nicholas, St. George and St. Seraphim of Sarov.

The iconostasis, which was transferred from the former church at 'Ataba Square, belonged, at one time, to the chapel of the Russian warship Oriel. In a corner on the south wall of the nave stands the White Russian flag (white-blue-red) with the black-orange stripes of the Romanoff Dynasty, and above the flag hangs a large copy of the Russian Imperial Cross of St. George.

The White Russian Community both in Alexandria and Cairo is now very small. There is no Russian priest to serve the community and the Divine Services are performed by a Greek priest, who knows Church Slavonic.

Other Greek Orthodox Churches

The Monastery and Church of St. George, Old Cairo ; the Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin Mary, Greek Orthodox Cemetery, Old Cairo ; the Church of the Unmercenary Saints, Shûbra ; the Church of St. Panteleemon, Greek Hospital, Abbasiyah ; the Church of St. Mark. Hârat al-Rûm ; the Church of St. Spyridon, Helwân ; the Church of the Holy Theotokos, Heliopolis ; the Church of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple, Heliopolis ; the Church of St. Demetrius, Zaitûn.

7. — THE ARMENIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES

The Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator

The Armenian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator built in 1928, is situated at 179, Sharia Ramses.

in a courtyard, in which there is also the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate and the Armenian Polyclinic (1945), and the Patriarchal Library, known as the Bibliothèque Turkomian with 6,000 volumes.

Above the entrance to the Cathedral is a beautiful mosaic of the Patron-Saint. The narthex is decorated with icons of which the most noteworthy is that of the Conversion of Armenia by St. Gregory. These paintings (1927) consist of 14 miniatures, which depict the life and sufferings of St. Gregory. At the north end of the narthex there is an altar dedicated to St. George (1936). Three large and beautiful paintings adorn the eastern part of the Cathedral, namely, the Crucifixion, the Institution of the Mystical Supper, and the Falling-asleep of the Holy Virgin Mary. The wall painting in the apse shows Christ surrounded by eight Angels and the Twelve Apostles. The Eucharistic Vessels are kept on a table north of the high-altar. The elaborate chandelier, which is suspended from the ceiling in the middle of the nave of the Cathedral, is said to weigh seven tons.

The building expenses were defrayed by sums bequeathed by Dikran Dabro Pasha and by Boghos Nubar Pasha.

The southern end of the narthex was dedicated as a memorial for the 1.5 million Armenian martyrs of 1915 in 1965. The Armenian stone cross was a gift by Vasgen I, the Armenian Catholicus of Echmiadzin.

The Church of St. Menas

This church is situated in the Armenian Orthodox cemetery of Old Cairo. It was built in 1843 by Gabriel the Monk. The cost for this church was partly defrayed by the Armenian people, and partly by Peter, the Armenian Bishop of Constantinople. Special services are held on the Sundays following Christmas and Easter. The old Church of St. Menas was replaced by a new building which was dedicated in the spring of 1963.

The Church of All Saints

This church is situated in the Armenian Orthodox cemetery in Heliopolis, and it was built in 1953.

The Church of the Holy Virgin

This church was built in 1839 at Sharia Bain al-Sûrayn. In 1852, Gabriel the Monk built the Armenian Patriarchate in the immediate proximity of this church. In 1886, the church was repaired, and in 1928, the Patriarchate was transferred to the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator. The church was dismantled in 1960.

8. — THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Church of the Holy Virgin Mary

This church is situated at 21, Sharia Ghamra, Ghamra, and was consecrated in 1935. One enters the church through a small courtyard, at the north side of which there is the reception hall. The church belongs to the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

The Syrian Orthodox Church at Ghamra dates back to 1913, when a small hall was built by Fr. Jubrîâl Antûn al-Mardînî for the purpose of conducting Divine Services. The first priest to serve the Syrian congregation in Cairo was Fr. Mansûr Tannûrjî al-Mardînî, who was succeeded in 1930 by Bishop Kîrillus Mikhâîl al-Musulî. In 1955, Bishop Kîrillus was succeeded by Fr. Baban Barnaba, and later by Fr. Nûh Sâba.

9. — THE CATHOLIC CHURCHES

A. THE ARMENIAN RITE

The Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Holy Virgin

The Armenian Catholic Patriarchate is situated at 36, Sharia Sabrî Abû 'Alâm, near the Midân Tal'at Harb in Cairo. The Cathedral, which is dedicated to the Annunciation of the Holy Virgin, was built in 1925 by Garabed Bey Matossian. The high altar is dedicated to the Annunciation, and the six side altars are dedicated respectively to St. Gregory the Illuminator, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. George

(north wall), St. Antony of Padua, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Theresa of Lisieux (south wall).

The first Armenian Catholic Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator was built in 1840, but was later dismantled.

Other Armenian Catholic Churches

Besides the Cathedral, the Armenian Catholics have also the Church of St. Theresa, 23, Sharia Rashîd, Heliopolis, which was dedicated in 1933. The Armenian Catholic Chapel at the cemetery in Old Cairo was built in 1922 by Mrs. Cathleen Limongelli, the daughter of Ya'qûb Artin Pasha.

B. THE CHALDAEAN RITE

The Church of St. Antony

The Chaldaean Catholic Patriarchate is situated at 43, Sharia Kamel Sidkî Pasha, Faggalah. One enters the Patriarchate through a courtyard in which is situated the Church of St. Antony the Great. This church, which was built in 1896, is artistically and architecturally uninteresting. A large oil painting of St. Antony is placed above the high-altar. Since 1960, monks of the Order of the Preaching of St. Mark inhabit the Patriarchate.

The Church of Our Lady of Fatima

This church is situated at Sharia Nûzha, Heliopolis, near the terminus of the Heliopolis Metro. Though the church is served by priests of the Chaldaean Rite, masses are celebrated alternately according to the Latin, Chaldaean and Coptic Catholic Rite.

The central altar is dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima, the northern altar to St. Joseph and the southern altar to St. Antony of Padua. The side altar at the north wall is dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of the Holy Virgin Mary. The Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, which is decorated with numerous votive offerings, is situated at the south wall.

A shrine, in honour of Our Lady of Fatima, is attached to the north wall of the church (1959). It is adorned with statues and pictures of Our Lady of Fatima, and the *Ave Maria* in 35 languages. North of the shrine is a spacious garden for processions on the feasts in honour of Our Lady of Fatima, which are observed on the 13th day of each month from May to October. The small chapel in the garden is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

Historical Note on the Origin of the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima

The last of eleven children, Jacinta Marto was born at Fatima in Portugal on March 11th, 1910. Her favourite companions were her brother Francis and her cousin Lucy. These children often used to recite the Rosary, while pasturing their flocks. In the spring and summer of 1916, they were admonished by an Angel to sanctify themselves by prayer and penance, for the Hearts of Jesus and Mary were mercifully disposed towards them. On the 13th of every month from May to October during 1917, Our Lady of the Rosary used to appear to them. She revealed secrets of great importance to the Church and to the world, and performed a miracle in October, which was witnessed by 70,000 persons. The three children became fervent apostles of the Holy Rosary and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Jacinta died in the odour of sanctity on the 20th of February, 1920, at the age of nine years, eleven months and nine days. Before dying she said :

« Tell everybody that God gives graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Tell them to ask these graces from her, and that the Heart of Jesus wishes to be venerated together with the Immaculate Heart of His Mother ».

Her brother Francis died about the same time, and her cousin Lucy became a Carmelite nun, who wrote two accounts of the visions.

The Church of Our Lady of Fatima, which is known mistakenly by many as the Church of St. Fatima — Heliopolis (see the U.A.R. Tourist Administration folder « Christianity in Egypt » 1961) was built entirely by small dona-

tions. The confusion of identity is due to the popularity of Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad and wife of 'Alî, the fourth caliph. The Church was built on condition that no bells were to be installed, whereupon a tape from the bens of St. Peter's in Rome was acquired to call the faithful to prayer.

C. THE COPTIC RITE

The Cathedral of St. Antony the Great

This beautiful cathedral, which was built in 1958, is situated at Sharia Yûsûf Pasha Sulaiman, Faggalah. Prior to the building of the present cathedral, the site was occupied by a smaller Church of St. Antony the Great, which was built in 1889. North of the cathedral there are the episcopal offices.

The cathedral has one altar, which is dedicated to St. Antony. Behind the altar, on the east wall, there is a large mosaic of the Pantocrator, the Holy Virgin with Child and six Saints : St. Cyril, St. Athanasius, St. Mark (north) ; St. Paul the Theban, St. Pachomius, St. Macarius (south). Below the mosaic, there is a painting of St. Antony with staff and clochette. The icons on the north and south sides of the altar show the Holy Virgin and the *Salvator Mundi* respectively. The modern iconostasis is adorned with icons of the Twelve Apostles.

The Church of the Holy Virgin

This church, which was dedicated in 1956, is situated on the first floor of a private house at Midân Qubbet al-Hawa, Shûbra. The church has three altars, which are dedicated to St. Mark (north), the Holy Virgin (centre), and St. George (south).

The modern paintings, which were executed by S. Antoun and Y. Attalah portray the following themes : The Entry into Jerusalem, Gethsemane, the Good Shepherd, the Ascension, the Flight into Egypt, the Mystical Supper, the Nativity, the Resurrection, Christ knocking at the Door, Christ preaching from the Boat.

Other Coptic Catholic Churches

In addition to the above mentioned churches, there are the following Coptic Catholic Churches : The Church of the Flight of the Holy Family, Darb al-Guenena, Muskî ; the Church of the Sacred Heart, 18, Sharia al-Imâm 'Alî, Heliopolis ; and the Church of the Holy Virgin, Hârat Dabbura, Old Cairo.

D. THE GREEK RITE

The Cathedral of the Resurrection

The Greek Catholic Patriarchate and the Greek Catholic Cathedral of the Resurrection are situated at Sharia Linan Pasha, Faggalah.

The Cathedral of the Resurrection was consecrated in 1903, and adjoining it, there are guest-rooms, offices, conference and waiting-rooms. The cathedral has three sanctuaries, which are dedicated to St. George, the Resurrection and the Holy Virgin. Behind the central altar is the episcopal throne.

A beautiful iconostasis bears the following icons (north to south) : St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, St. Cyril, the Resurrection, St. Gabriel, the Holy Virgin, Christ, St. John the Baptist, St. Athanasius, St. Antony, St. Elias, St. John of Damascus.

The Blessed Sacrament is reserved inside a silver dove, which is suspended from the dome above the central altar. This custom is peculiar to the Melkites. The baptistery is situated in the north-west corner of the nave.

The Church of St. Mary of Peace

This Church is situated at 4, Midan al-Shaikh Yûsûf, Garden City, and has served for a number of years the international Catholic Community.

At one time the Anglican Pro-Cathedral, this church was purchased by Msgr. Zoghby from the Church of

England for the Greek Catholic Community. The church was rebuilt by the architect Elias Chagouri, who preserved the former simplicity. An iron grill, adorned with the icons of Christ and the Holy Virgin, serves as an iconostasis. The church has three sanctuaries. The northern sanctuary is of interest, because the altar is built of alabaster. The beautiful stained-glass windows were donated by several Anglican families.

Other Greek Catholic Churches

In addition to the above mentioned churches, there are the following Greek Catholic Churches : St. George's at 11, Sharia Naguib al-Rihânî off Sharia 'Imad al-Dîn ; St. Cyril's at 2, Sharia al Thawra, Heliopolis ; the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Midân Isma'îlîya, Heliopolis, St. Joseph's at Sharia Salîm al-Awwal, Zaitûn ; the Church of the Annunciation at Sharia Gazira Badrân, Shûbra ; the Church of the Assumption at 55, Sharia al-Gaish, Muski, and the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Helwân.

E. THE LATIN RITE

The Basilica of the Holy Virgin

The Basilica of the Holy Virgin is situated at Sharia al-Ahrâm, Heliopolis. The building of the cathedral was financed by Edouard Baron Empain, and was constructed by Alexandre Marcel.

The high altar is dedicated to the Holy Virgin. The northern side altar is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the southern side altar to St. Joseph. At the western end of the north wall, there is the altar of St. Theresa of Lisieux. The baptistery is situated in the south-west corner of the nave. The west wall is adorned with two paintings, which portray St. Domenico Savio (1842-1857) and St. Maria Goretti (1890-1902).

Twenty-two beautifully polished red granite columns attract the attention of the visitor. The crypt with the

tombs of Edouard Baron Empain (1852-1919), the founder of Heliopolis, and Jean Baron Empain (1902-1946) is situated underneath the high altar. Twenty steps lead to the crypt, which is built of grey granite. The entrance to the crypt is normally closed with a large granite slab.

The Cathedral of St. Mark

The cathedral is situated at Sharia al-Ba'tha, Shûbra, and is served by the Fathers of the Society of the African Mission (S.M.A.). The cathedral was built in 1907.

The high altar is dedicated to St. Mark. The side altars on the south wall are dedicated to St. Antony of Padua, Our Lady of Fatima, and Our Lady of the Rosary, while those on the north wall are dedicated to St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle (1651-1719), the founder of the Order of the Christian Brothers, and St. Theresa of Lisieux. The baptistery is situated in the south-west corner of the nave, and above the baptistery, there is the statue of St. Peter Claver, S. J., the Patron of the S.M.A. The altar in the southern transept is dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, that in the northern transept to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Also, in the northern transept, there is the tomb of Msgr. Jules Girard (1863-1950) of the S. M. A. Behind the high altar in the apse, there is the altar of St. Joseph. On both sides and behind the high altar there are five statues of St. Cyril, St. Jeanne d'Arc, St. Mark, St. Augustine and St. Anne. The statues at the west wall represent St. George and the Angel of God. The statues were made by M. Marino.

The Pro-Cathedral of St. Joseph

The Pro-Cathedral of St. Joseph, at 2, Sharia Banque Misr, belongs to the Franciscan Fathers of the Custody of the Holy Land, and is one of the principal churches of the Latin rite.

The church, which was consecrated in 1909, has a high altar dedicated to St. Joseph, and eleven side altars. Those on the south wall are dedicated from east to west to the Immaculate Conception, St. Antony of Padua, the Holy Virgin of Pompey, St. Rita of Cascia, St. Paul, Our Lady of Fatima. The side altars on the northern wall

are dedicated to the Holy Family, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Lucia, the Crucifixion, and St. Theresa of Lisieux. The baptistery is situated west of the side altar of St. Theresa of Lisieux.

The Church of the Sacred Heart

The Church of the Sacred Heart is situated at 3, Sharia Abdel Khalik Tharwat, next to the Victoria Hospital. The church is served by the Fathers of the Congregation of the Sons of the Sacred Heart.

The high altar is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whereas the two-side altars are dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary (north) and St. Antony of Padua (south). The main apse is adorned with a large mosaic portraying Christ, the Holy Virgin and St. Joseph. Above the high altar, there is a large medallion of the Sacred Heart. The two paintings on the north and south walls portray the Regina Mundi and the Holy Family.

The Church of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus

The Church of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus is situated at Sharia Shûbra and Sharia Shibân. Adjoining the church is the Monastery of the Carmelite Fathers. In 1926, the Carmelite Fathers established a small hospice in Shûbra, dedicated to St. Theresa. The foundation stone for the church was laid in May 1931. On the Feast of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus (October 3) in 1932, the first part of the church was completed and opened for public worship.

The church is approached by a broad flight of nine steps. As one advances the spacious nave, one notices to the right and to the left of the aisles lofty arcades, which are supported by 16 columns. The high altar, which is dedicated to St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, is built of white marble. The door of the tabernacle is of gilt bronze adorned with Byzantine symbols. South of the high altar is the Chapel of the Sacred Heart, where the Sacrament is reserved. Two iron railings reaching to the frieze enclose the Chapel. The sacristy is to the north of the high altar. The apsidal altars are dedicated

to Our Lady of Mount Carmel (north) and to St. Joseph (south). The small side chapels on the north wall are dedicated to St. Elias and to St. John of the Cross, those on the south side are dedicated to St. Theresa Margherita Redi and to St. Theresa of Avila. The railing of the tribune is in wrought iron, irregular in design, and of simple religious character. The stained-glass windows represent the Little Flower in Glory, St. Cecilia (south) and St. Agnes (north).

The Crypt

The crypt, built beneath the high altar, is circular in plan. The walls are covered completely with ex-voto marble tablets in many languages, and glass compartments with innumerable ex-votos in silver and gold. In the centre of the crypt, there is the altar, which is enclosed by an iron railing decorated with Byzantine interlaces of fine workmanship. Beneath the altar is the recumbent figure of St. Theresa enclosed in a glass case. Six thousand marble slabs in twenty five different languages record the favours received from the intercession of St. Theresa.

St. Theresa of Lisieux

St. Theresa was born at Alençon, Normandy, France on January 2, 1873. Her parents, Louis Martin and Zelie Guerin, provided Theresa with a truly Christian home. As a child, she promised earnestly that she would refuse God nothing, a resolution which she endeavoured to keep until death. At the age of nine, Theresa entered the school at the Abbey of the Benedictines. At the age of thirteen, however, her poor health forced her father to take her out of school, and place her under the guidance of a tutor. She had long felt in her heart the desire to consecrate herself entirely to the love of God by becoming a nun. After her fourteenth year Theresa followed her two elder sisters, who had already entered the Carmelite Convent at Lisieux. After surmounting many obstacles on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities. St. Theresa became the bride of Christ at the age of fifteen. For nine years, she lived in the Carmelite Convent at Lisieux. St. Theresa entered on the last period of her short life on earth, when she achieved and perfected her beautiful sanctity. She performed nothing extraordinary

or miraculous, she was noted for no particular form of spiritual exercise. She died after a painful illness on September 30, 1897. The Church recognised her sanctity by declaring her *blessed* on April 29, 1923. Two years later, May 17, 1925, Pope Pius XI canonised her and solemnly placed her in the Calendar of Saints, proclaiming her an example to be followed by the whole Christian world.

The devotion to St. Theresa embraces peoples of all creeds and all classes, whether they be Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim or Jew. Indeed, she has become a popular patron in many Muslim areas. Young girls who want to get married go to the Church of St. Theresa with a piastre in their hands. They moisten it with saliva and rub it on the glass case in St. Theresa's crypt. If the piastre sticks on the glass, it is interpreted that they soon will marry. The devotion to St. Theresa is rapidly spreading in Egypt, as seen by the many altars which are dedicated in her honour.

Lit. : Al-Guawguari, Ch., *La Rose de Lisieux*, Shubra, No. 5 (1960).

Fairfax, J. R., *The Sanctuary of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus*. Alexandria, 1949.

Ghéon, H., *The Secret of the Little Flower*, London, 1940.

Les Pères Franciscains d'Assiout, *La Rose de Lisieux*, Shubra, No. 6 (1960).

Marie Regis de St. Jean, *La Rose de Lisieux*, *Shubra*, Nos. 6 and 7 (1961).

McPherson, J. M., *The Moulids of Egypt*. Cairo, 1941.

The Church of St. Joseph

The Church of St. Joseph at Sharia Ahmad Sabri in Zamalek belongs to the Congregation of the Sons of the Sacred Heart of Verona. It was built in 1933.

In the eastern apse there is a large painting of St. Joseph. On the south wall there are three side altars which are dedicated to the Immaculata, St. Theresa of Lisieux and St. Maria Goretti. The altar of St. Maria is made of alabaster. On the northern wall there are two side altars, that of the Sacred Heart and that of St. Antony of Padua, as well as the baptistery with a large crucifix above it. A mosaic with the Seven Last Words in Latin adorns the niche of the baptistery.

The Church of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin

Situated immediately to the west of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land in the Muski, 12 Bendâqah, there is the Franciscan Church of the Assumption. This church was built in 1854.

Above the central altar there is a painting of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin. The side altars on the south are dedicated to St. Antony of Padua and the Mother of Divine Grace. Within the picture, there is a Byzantine icon of the Galactatrophousa. The side altars on the north are dedicated to St. Francis and St. Theresa of Lisieux. North of the main altar, there is a side chapel of the Holy Virgin of Sorrows with the tomb of Archbishop P. Guasco (1803-1859), who served as the first Apostolic Vicar of Egypt. Above the altar there is a statue of the Pietas. The sacristy is to the south of the main altar.

The Church of the Holy Family at Matariya

The Church of the Holy Family at Matariya is situated about 10 km. north-east of Cairo. Matariya is a small town which can be easily reached from Cairo by bus, taxi or train (from Kubrî Limun Station).

The Tree of the Holy Virgin stands in an enclosure on the right hand side of the main street, just before one approaches the Church of the Holy Family.

According to tradition, the Holy Family rested in Matariya on their flight to Egypt. The Apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew states that the Holy Virgin saw a palm tree and wished to rest under it. When she was seated but saw fruit on it, she asked Joseph for some fruit. But Jesus bade the palm tree to give to His mother of its fruit, and the tree bent as low as her feet, and she gathered as much as she wanted.

The village of Matariya enjoyed great popularity among the pilgrims to the Holy Land. Felix Fabri (1480) noticed close to the gate an immense fig tree, and in its hollow trunk, as in a small chapel, two lamps hung, for the tree had once opened to provide refuge for the Holy

Virgin. According to Pero Tafur (1435-1439), only five pilgrims at a time were permitted to enter the Garden of Balm, and none were allowed to pinch or nip off leaves or twigs to take away with them. Indeed, Burchard of Mount Sion (1285-1295) records that he went to Matariya and carried off much balsam wood and bathed in the well and in the gardens wherein the Holy Virgin had dipped her son. All the pilgrims are unanimous in their observation that the Garden of Matariya was tilled by Christians only. Ludolph von Suchem (1336) saw among the Christian guardians four Germans. Marino Sanuto (1321) and John Poloner (1421) believed that they had seen the actual palm tree which had bowed itself to the Holy Virgin so that she might get dates from it.

The balsam shrubs have long since disappeared. The sycamore tree which now stands at Matariya was planted in 1672. The fall of this venerable tree, due to old age, took place on June 14, 1906, but fortunately a living shoot from it remains to this day.

The Church of the Holy Family at Matariya was consecrated on December 6, 1904. The church is noteworthy because of its interesting wall paintings which portray scenes of the Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt.

On the north wall are portrayed the Massacre of the Innocents, the order of depart, and the Flight to Egypt. Off the south wall are the Entry into Heliopolis, the Tree of the Virgin and Rest on the Banks of the River Nile.

A beautiful statue of the Holy Family surmounts the high altar. Above the entrance of the church is the following inscription « Sanctae Familiae in Aegypto Exsuli ». Seven years and seven quarantes of indulgences are attached to this site.

From the earliest days onward, there existed a church at Matariya, yet what happened to this church is unknown. A church of some sort, however, was rebuilt at Matariya in 1504. By the beginning of the 17th century, this building was used as a mosque and a chapel (Boucher, 1611) and by the middle of the 17th century the building was definitely turned into a mosque and the Christians were forbidden entrance. About the beginning of the 18th century things appear to have taken

another turn, and we hear of Christian services being conducted at Matariya.

In the sacristy of the Church of the Holy Family at Matariya is preserved a curious relic, a thick stick. A ring of silver with a Latin engraving on it certifies that this stick is a branch of the famous Tree of Obedience of the Wâdî al-Natrûn.

Fr. M. Jullien went on an excursion to the Monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn where he saw the Tree standing between the Monastery of St. Bishoi and the Monastery of St. Macarius. He cut a branch of it which he placed in the hands of the statue of St. Joseph.

Lit. : Jullien, M., *L'Egypte, Souvenirs Bibliques et Chrétiens*, Lille.
——— « Traditions et Légendes Coptes sur le Voyage de la Sainte Famille en Egypte », *Missions Catholiques*, XIX, 1886, 9-12.
Meinardus, O., *In the Steps of the Holy Family from Bethlehem to Upper Egypt*. Cairo, 1963.

Other Latin Churches

The Church of Our Lady of Carmel (Franciscans), Bûlâq ; the Church of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin (Franciscans), Muskî ; the Church of the Sacred Heart (Society of the African Mission), Sakakini ; the Church of St. Antony (Franciscans), Zâhir ; the Church of St. Michael (Society of the African Mission), Heliopolis ; the Church of the Immaculate Conception (Society of the African Mission), Zaitûn ; the Church of the Holy Family (Franciscans), Ma'âdi ; the Church of the Holy Family (The Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Verona), Helwân.

F. THE MARONITE RITE

The Cathedral of St. Joseph

The Episcopal Residence of the Maronite Bishop for Egypt and the Sudan is situated in Sharia Hamdî, al-Zâhir, opposite the Cathedral of St. Joseph. This cathedral was built in 1906 with funds donated by Count Khalîl Sa'ab, whose

tomb is situated in the churchyard, in front of the entrance to the cathedral.

The Cathedral of St. Joseph is a plain structure. The three altars are dedicated to St. Joseph (centre), the Holy Virgin (south) and St. Antony of Padua (north).

Other Maronite Churches

In addition to the Cathedral of St. Joseph, the Maronites have five churches in Cairo : The Church of St. George (1881) at Sharia Kenisset al-Mawarna, Shûbra ; the Church of St. Elias (1883) at the Maronite Cemetery, Old Cairo ; the Church of the Holy Virgin (1849) at Darb al-Guinena, Muskî, is the second oldest Maronite Church. The Church of St. Maron (1907) is situated in Heliopolis, and the Church of St. Theresa, Zaitûn, is the most recent church.

G. THE SYRIAN RITE

The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary

The Cathedral, which was built in 1904 and enlarged in 1948, is situated at 2, Sharia Ard al-Imamayn, al-Zâhir.

The Cathedral has three altars. The high altar is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. The northern altar is dedicated to St. Ephraem the Syrian, and the southern altar to St. George. Four statues adorn the four corners of the cathedral. In the north-east corner, there is the statue of St. Joseph, in the south-east corner that of St. Antony of Padua, in the south-west corner that of the Blessed Heart of Our Lady, and in the north-west corner the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. In addition, there is one statue on each side of the high altar, representing the Immaculate Conception (north) and the Sacred Heart of Jesus (south). The pictures on the north wall portray the Baptism of Christ and the Agony of St. Joseph ; on the south wall is St. Barbara.

Other Syrian Catholic Churches

In addition to the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary, the Syrian Catholics have in Cairo the Church of St. Elias

(1851), Darb al-Guenena, and the Church of St. Catherine (1957) in Heliopolis.

10. — THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN EGYPT (ANGLICAN)

The Cathedral Church of All Saints

The Episcopal (Anglican) Cathedral at Corniche al-Nîl, on the east bank of the Nile, north of the Qasr al-Nil Bridge and the Nile Hil ton, served as the seat of the Anglican Bishop in Egypt and Libya. It was also the parish church of Cairo for all Episcopalians of whatever nationality.

The first public suggestion for building an English church in Cairo came from Dean Stanley when visiting Egypt in 1862 with the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII.

The first Church of All Saints was opened on January 26, 1876 and a parsonage was added in 1884. Extensions to the church were carried out in 1891 and 1899, and from 1906 onwards efforts were made to find a more suitable site.

It was Bishop Rennie McInnes, then a missionary in Egypt, who suggested to the Parochial Church Council on April 17, 1915 that, instead of a new church, a cathedral should be their aim.

The last service in All Saints Church was held on November 14, 1925 and the congregation migrated to St. Mary's Church, Qasr al-Dubârah. The money from the sale of the All Saints site was paid into a Cathedral Building Fund.

In July 1928, the Egyptian Government authorized the sale of the present site for the building of the Cathedral, and it was bought at a cost of L.E. 32,000 in 1936.

The foundation stone was laid by Bishop Gwynne on November 20, 1936. (The foundation stone can be seen in the outside wall of the East end of the Lady Chapel).

The architect was the late Adrian Gilbert Scott, M.C., F.R.I.B.A., whose brother the late Sir Giles Gilbert

Scott, O.M., was architect of Liverpool Cathedral. The general contractors were Messrs. Hettena Bros. of Cairo.

The Cathedral was consecrated on St. Mark's Day, April 25, 1938, by the Archbishop of York, (Dr. William Temple), who later became Archbishop of Canterbury.

During the war years 1939-1945 the Cathedral was of great service to thousands of service men and others, and in 1951 a Memorial Window to the men of the Eighth Army was unveiled in the Lady Chapel by Lord Montgomery.

In the following years 1952-1956 there was a great reduction in the number of Anglicans resident in Cairo, and between 1956-1960 services in both English and Arabic were maintained by the Egyptian clergy.

In 1963, a memorial tablet in honour of Bishop Gwynne was unveiled by the Most Reverend A.C. McInnes Archbishop in Jerusalem.

Because of the construction of an additional bridge across the Nile, the Cathedral is being moved to a site on Gezirah Island. Another church will be erected on the property of the former Loutfallah Palace, behind the Omar Khayyam hotel.

Other Episcopal Churches

The Church of Jesus the Light of the World in Old Cairo is the Temple Gardiner Memorial Church and is adjacent to the Harpur Memorial Hospital. The Church of St. Michael and All Angels is in Heliopolis. Formerly a British Chaplaincy Church, it now serves an Egyptian congregation. The Church of the Good Shepherd is in Gizah, across the Nile from Old Cairo. The Church of St. John the Baptist in Ma'âdi is also used by the Ma'âdi Community Church, the Coptic Evangelical Church and the German Evangelical Church.

Lit. : Blackburn, D., *Notes for Visitors, the Cathedral Church of All Saints.* Cairo.

11.—THE COPTIC EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

The Coptic Evangelical Church has 21 congregations in Cairo. Faggalah Evangelical Church, Sharia Ibn Habîb, Fag-

galah ; Azbakiyah Evangelical Church, 4, Sharia al-Mîlîgî ; Qasr al-Dubârah Evangelical Church, Sharia Shaikh Rihân ; Al-Malik al-Sâleh Evangelical Church, Ginênat Khorshîd, Old Cairo ; Abbasiyah Evangelical Church, 9, Sharia al-Masa'ûdi, Abbasiyah ; Shûbra al-Nuzhah Evangelical Church, Sharia Doctor 'Abd al-Wahâb, Shûbra ; Heliopolis Evangelical Church, Sharia Cleopatra, Heliopolis ; Qubbah Gardens Evangelical Church, Sharia Manqarîûs Bishârah, Qubbah Gardens; Manshiyat al-Sadr Evangelical Church, Sharia Hadaiq al-Qubbah ; 'Ain Shams Evangelical Church, 'Ain Shams ; Sharâbiyah Evangelical Church, Sharia Bibâwî Barsûm; Gizah Evangelical Church, 15, Sharia al-Mahattah ; 'Abdîn Evangelical Church, 8, 'Atfat Sharîf, Sharia Muhammad Bey Farîd ; Qulalî Evangelical Church, 18, Sharia al-Qulalî ; Shûbra Evangelical Church, Sharia Yûsuf Bey 'Airûd ; Shûbra al-Sharqiyah Evangelical Church, 23, Sharia Shahatah Sa'ad ; Zaitûn Evangelical Church, Sharia Mahattah, Zaitûn ; Helwân Evangelical Church, Sharia Sharîf Pasha, Helwân ; Qubbah Palace Evangelical Church, Sharia Gisr al-Suez ; Rod al-Farag Evangelical Church, Sharia Hussain Sha'aban ; Ard Sharîf Evangelical Church (congregation only, no church).

12.—THE FOREIGN PROTESTANT CHURCHES

St. Andrew's United Church of Cairo

In 1961, St. Andrew's Church of Scotland changed its name to St. Andrew's United Presbyterian Church of Cairo and became associated with the Commission of Ecumenical Missions and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. In 1963, the congregation voted to be an autonomous Community Church. This church, which is situated at 38, Sharia 26 July, serves the English-speaking foreign Protestant community in Cairo.

In 1898, the Convener of the Church of Scotland authorized the Rev. E. Cowan to sail to Egypt for the purpose of establishing a Church of Scotland in Cairo. The first service was held on February 5, 1899 in the German Evangelical School. In 1907, it was decided to purchase land for a church building. On January 2, 1909, the

church was officially opened by the Very Reverend J. Mitford Mitchell, then Moderator of the Church of Scotland and Chaplain in Ordinary to H.M. the King. The memorial stone was laid by Sir Eldon Gorst, H.M. Minister Plenipotentiary. During the First and the Second World Wars the Church served men of the Scottish and Colonial Regiments stationed in Cairo. In 1936, the Church Hall was dedicated by the Right Reverend Marshall B. Land. Since 1956, the church has been largely maintained by the American Protestant constituency.

The German Evangelical Church

This church is situated at 32-34, Sharia al-Galâa, Bûlâq. It is associated with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID), and serves the German-speaking Protestant Community, whether it be Lutheran or Evangelical Reformed.

In 1864, the church community was founded as a branch of the German-French speaking Eglise Protestante d'Alexandrie. In 1869, the community was presented by Khedive Ismâ'îl with a gift of land in Sharia Maghrabi, the block which nowadays is enclosed by Sharia Adly Pasha, Sharia 'Imad al-Dîn and Sharia 'Abd al-Khalik Tharwat. On December 5, 1869, the foundation-stone was laid by the Prussian Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, later Emperor Friedrich III, who had come to Egypt on the occasion of the inaugural celebrations of the Suez Canal. In 1872, the church became independent of its parent-body in Alexandria. In 1907, the church at Sharia Maghrabi was sold, and a new church-building, vicarage and school were erected at Bûlâq. The present church was consecrated in 1912. The property of the German Evangelical Church was under sequestration from 1915-1935 and again from 1939-1950. In 1964, the church celebrated its centenary.

Behind the altar, there is a large lofty wooden cross. The baptismal font of bronze has a cover surmounted by a dove. The carved wooden pulpit stands on the left of the sanctuary, which is approached by three steps. The crucifix on the altar and the candlesticks were presented by the Emperor Wilhelm II, and the Altar-Bible was a gift of Auguste Victoria. The two statues in front of the church represent Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560).

Lit. : Kaufman, A., *Geschichte der Evangelischen Gemeinde zu Alexandrien 1856-1898.* Lahr, Baden, 1898.

Kremkau, K. (ed.), *100 Jahre Deutsche Evangelische Gemeinde in Kairo, 1864-1964.* Cairo, 1964.

Wedemann, E., *Mitteilungen aus der Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Kairo.* Graefenhainichen, 1898.

L'Eglise Evangélique du Caire

The French-speaking Protestant Church is an autonomous Christian fellowship which has no direct ecclesiastical relationship with any church either in Europe or in Egypt. The Church is international and interdenominational in character ; the majority of its members are of Swiss nationality.

The Church is situated at 39, Sh. 26 July, opposite St. Andrew's United Church of Cairo.

This community of French-speaking Protestants was founded in 1909. The Church was dedicated on Dec. 10, 1910, though prior to this date, French-speaking Divine Services had been conducted under the auspices of the Société Evangélique de Genève.

The Ma'âdi Community Church
(The Church of St. John the Baptist)

The Ma'âdi Community Church is a Christian fellowship associated with the Department of Overseas Union Churches of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. The church is both international and interdenominational in character, and the members of the church represent numerous nationalities and denominations. The policy of the church is congregational.

The Church of St. John the Baptist was built in 1920, originally of wood and corrugated iron. In 1929, the services of the eminent architect Sir Herbert Baker were secured, who designed the church as it now stands. The foundation stone of red granite was brought especially from Aswân. The building belongs to the Episcopal Church of Egypt. In 1948 the first Community Church Services were conducted in this Church.

CHAPTER XX

MUSEUMS WITH CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES

1.—THE COPTIC MUSEUM

The Coptic Museum in Old Cairo is situated on the site of the ancient Fortress of Babylon.

> The fortress of Babylon dates from the time of the Emperor Augustus (30 B.C.) and was reconstructed during the reign of the Emperor Trajan (98 A.D.) and further remodelled about 395 A.D. by the Emperor Arcadius.

The Coptic Museum which was founded in 1908 and inaugurated in 1910, was placed under the control of the Government by a royal decree of 1931. The greater part of the monuments exhibited in the rooms of the Coptic Museum have come from different sites and fill an important gap in the records of Egyptian archaeology. The museum as such was founded by Marcus Simaika Pasha, a Coptic notable, whose bust is displayed in front of the entrance to the museum. In 1947, the Coptic section of the Egyptian Museum at Midân al-Tahrîr was transferred to the Coptic Museum.

All the rooms of the museum are constructed with a view to retain a Coptic atmosphere. The contents of the museum have been arranged in nine sections :

1. *Stone Work*

> The contents of this section consist mainly of architectural fragments, niches, columns, capitals, lintels, panels, doors, painted frescoes. One of the most beautiful and important items in this collection is the sun-baked polychrome mud-niche from Bawît (5th cent.), showing

the Pantocrator supported by the four animals of the Apocalypse and the Holy Virgin with the Apostles and two local saints. Other interesting items of this collection are several stelae from Nubia, Aswân, Edfû, Akhmîm and Saqqâra.

2. *Manuscripts*

This section contains a collection of papyri, parchments and paper *MSS.* as well as some ostraka. One of the greatest Coptic literary treasures of the museum is a complete papyrus corpus of 13 Coptic Gnostic Codices. These codices were discovered in earthen-ware jars buried in the ruins of an ancient cemetery near Qasr al-Sayad. Among these codices is the famous Gnostic Gospel of Thomas which contains a collection of 114 Sayings of Jesus Christ. Most of the exhibited *MSS.* are of parchment and paper from the Monastery of St. Macarius in the Wâdî al-Natrûn.

3. *Textiles*

The Copts have always been famous for the manufacture of textiles. In many ways, they adopted the patterns and motives of their pharaonic ancestors, and christianized them with Christian symbols and motives. Some designs show clearly the pharaonic influence, while others are influenced by the Graeco-Roman culture.

4. *Icons and Ivory Work*

The icon collection is one of the most interesting collections of the museum, consisting of several very good Coptic icons with strong Byzantine influence and some typical Coptic representations. The decoration of the small ivory objects for personal use, such as boxes, combs, bracelets also show a distinguished taste of the Coptic artists for ornamentation.

5. *Woodwork*

The museum possesses a rich collection of Coptic woodwork, and the objects exhibited include a collection of carved and painted items showing scenes connected with the Nile, boats, crocodiles, fishes, lotus plants, birds, etc. A long 5th cent. panel shows Christ's Entry into the Holy City on Palm Sunday.

6. *Metal Objects*

The metal collection is remarkable for its diversity in material containing gold, silver, bronze, copper and iron. Religious objects include censers, chandeliers, sanctuary lamps, crosses, keys for church and monastery doors. Besides a great number of personal objects, there is a whole range of kitchen utensils derived from different centuries. Also exhibited in this section are instruments and objects of medicine, measures and weights. One of the outstanding objects of this collection is an early Roman eagle of bronze, a silent reminder that the Coptic Museum was built within the precincts of the Roman Fortress of Babylon.

7. *Recent Acquisitions and Ethiopian Art*

Among the most recent acquisitions are the objects discovered by the staff of the Coptic Museum in May 1951 at the Shrine of St. Menas at Mareotis. The small antiquities which were found during the excavations consist mainly of ampullae of St. Menas, mosaic specimens, candle-holders and the like.

The Ethiopian collection dates from the visit of H.I.M. Haile Sellassie I in 1959. The imperial crown of Menelik II was a donation to Cyril V who presented it to the museum. One should also notice the icon of St. Takla Haimanot, the national Saint of Ethiopia.

8. *Pottery and Glass-work*

This collection contains several dishes, vases, and jars of different sizes and shapes, some of which are ornamented with animals. This section also includes a good collection of lamps.

9. *Library*

The library of the Coptic Museum is situated in an annex to the museum and contains a collection of papyri, parchment and paper *MSS.* dating from the 4th to the 18th century in Coptic and in Arabic.

The museum is open every day :

During the months of November, March and April from 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

During the period from December to February from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

During the period from May to the end of October from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The museum can be reached by car via Sharia Qasr al-Aini, Sharia Gami' 'Amr, and Sharia Mârî Girgis, or by train from Bâb al-Lûq to Mârî Girgis.

Lit. : Labib, P., *The Coptic Museum and the Fortress of Babylon at Old Cairo.* Cairo. 1958.

Marcus H. Simaika Pasha, C.B.E., F.S.A., *A Brief Guide to the Coptic Museum and to the Principal Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo.* Cairo, 1938.

Russell, D., *Medieval Cairo and the Monasteries of the Wadi Natrun,* London, 1962.

2.—THE COPTIC ANTIQUITIES IN THE NILOMETER MUSEUM AT RODA ISLAND

The Nilometer Museum on Roda Island is situated at the southernmost end of the island. Those visiting the Nilometer should not fail to pay a visit to the museum, which is situated in the immediate vicinity, and where numerous Coptic antiquities are exhibited.

These objects of Christian art and architecture consist mainly of pediments, fragments of niches, pedestals, fragments of columns, socles, capitals, friezes. The objects belong to the 6th century. They were discovered during the excavations of the substructure of the celebrated Nilometer which were carried out by Kamel 'Uthman Ghaleb Bey, Under-Secretary of State for Public Works, between December 1934 and July 1939.

Lit. : Drioton, E., *Les Sculptures Coptes du Nilomètre de Rodah.* Cairo, 1942.

Wessel, Klaus. *Koptische Kunst. Die Spaetantike in Aegypten.* Recklinghausen, 1963.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES BETWEEN CAIRO AND SOHAG

1.—THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES BETWEEN CAIRO AND MINYA

The Ruins of the Monastery of al-Nâhya at Abû Roâsh

The ruins of this once famous monastery can be easily reached from any point in Cairo. One proceeds from Gizah on the Boulevard des Pyramides as far as Mena village, and turns at the second bridge to the right and follows the road which runs parallel to the canal for 8 km. to the village of Abû Roâsh. The village of Abû Roâsh is situated on the edge of the Gabal Abû Roâsh. Proceed through the village and park the car in the vicinity of the villa of Husniya, the sister of former King Idris of Libya. From there walk 500 metres parallel to the edge of the desert.

The remains of the monastery, though at one time excavated, are covered with sand, yet the numerous potsherds and mud-brick walls indicate the vast size of the monastery.

During the patriarchate of Alexander II (8th cent.), the monastery with the Church of the Holy Virgin « on the holy mountain of Ausim », served as a place of refuge for bishops during the persecutions. HPCC, *Patr. Orient.* V, 109). Within the monastery were found the biographies of 42 patriarchs from St. Mark the Evangelist to Simon I and nine biographies from Menas I to Shenute I.

According to tradition, this monastery was founded in the 4th cent. Al-Mu'izz li-din'Allah (973 A.D.) camped beneath the walls of the monastery and stayed there for seven months. Destroyed by al-Hâkim (996-1020), it was soon reconstructed. Al-Amir bi-ahkam 'Allah (1102-1130) visited the monastery in the 12th century. It is said that the Caliph paid the monks 1000 dirhams for their hospitality. Al-Amir was frequently entertained by the monks, so that eventually they received 25,000 dirhams from the Caliph.

According to Abû Sâlih (13th cent.), the church of the monastery was named after Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, because the tomb of Martha and Mary lies beneath it in a crypt. There was in the monastery a large and lofty keep, consisting of three stories. Moreover, near the keep was the Church of St. Antony which in the 13th century had fallen into decay. Outside the monastery there were numerous cells which belonged to the monks of the Monastery of St. Macarius in the Wâdî al-Natrûn.

The Monastery was also known as the Dair al-Karram, or the Monastery of the Vinedresser. According to al-Maqrizi, the monastery was destroyed in 1354.

Lit. : Evetts, B. T. A., *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and some Neighbouring Countries attributed to Abu Salih the Armenian.* Oxford, 1895.
Palanque, M. Ch., « Rapport sur les fouilles d'El-Deir », *Bull. Inst. Franç. du Caire,* 11, 163 ; also, *Annales du Service,* XVII, 274-276.

The Monastery of St. Mercurius at Tammûah

Those on their way to Memphis, Saqqâra or Dahshûr may want to stop at the village of Tammûah, 11 km. south of Gizah, to visit the ancient Monastery of St. Mercurius or the Dair Abû Saifain. Coming from Cairo, one should turn at Tammûah to the left (east) and follow the road through the village for about one and a half kilometre. The monastery is situated north of the village on the bank of the Nile.

Since 1967, the monastery buildings have been used as a training centre for the Rural Diakonia of the Coptic Church. This centre is administered by Bishop Samuel in Cairo.

The Church of St. Mercurius is situated in a spacious courtyard, and is inhabited by several Coptic families and a Coptic priest.

> South of the present buildings, one can still see the remains of the ancient wall, which enclosed the monastery. Visitors should not fail to enter the keep (qasr). From the second floor of the keep, one has a magnificent view of Tûrah, Ma'âdi and Cairo.

The Church has three sanctuaries, which are dedicated to St. Dimiana (north), St. Mercurius (centre) and St. John the Baptist (south). The wooden haikal screen is adorned with twenty-seven icons representing the Apostles and Egyptian Saints. The baptistery is situated in the north corner of the church. Please note the Shrine of St. Mercurius on the north wall with a bolster containing the relics of St. Mercurius or St. Paphnutius.

> Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) gives the following account: « The monastery is surrounded by an enclosing wall. Its church is named after St. Mercurius, and overlooks the river, to which it is close. Contiguous to the monastery there is a keep, entered from the church ; and in its upper story there are fine manzarahs. The monastery was restored by the Shaikh Abûl Yumn Wazîr, metwallî of the Diwân of Lower Egypt, in the caliphate of al-Amir (1101-1130). In the church lies the body of St. Paphnutius, the superior of this monastery. The monastery contains a painting of the Lady, the pure Virgin Mary. Al-Afdal (12th cent.) took pleasure in sitting in his place in the upper story of the building. The Shaikh Abûl Yumn provided for this church vessels of gold and silver ».

Lit.: Evetts, B. T. A., *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and some neighbouring Countries attributed to Abu Salih the Armenian.* Oxford. 1895.

The Great Church of St. Peter

During the patriarchate of Khâîl I (743-767), a large church in honour of St. Peter was built in Gizah on the banks of the Nile. To this day, the ruins of this church, also known as the great Catholicon, have not been discovered.

The Ruins of the Monastery of St. Jeremiah at Saqqâra

Those who are interested in Christian antiquities should not fail to visit the ruins of the Monastery of St. Jeremiah, which are situated in the vicinity of the Pharaonic monuments at Saqqâra.

One can reach Saqqâra either by train (Luxor line) to Badrashein and from there by taxi via Memphis to Saqqâra or by car following the main road from Cairo to Asyût as far as Badrashein. The distance from Cairo to Saqqâra is about 28 kilcmetres. Coming from Badrashein, one follows the road, which leads to the Pyramid of Unis (Onnos) and the Mastaba of Mereruka. After having ascended the hill for about 150 metres, it is advisable to park the car near the first guard house. From there one proceeds on foot to the south for another 150 metres. Though many of the ruins are covered by sand, the remains of the three churches, the oil press and numerous cells can still be seen. Beware of the deep shaft in the southern part of the monastery which leads to the Tomb of Nesitahuti.

The Monastery of St. Jeremiah was built in the first half of the 6th century. The columns and bases of the main church were of Proconnesian marble and probably imported ready made. For a century and a half the monks may have enjoyed a comparatively peaceful time and some expansion of buildings and many repairs must have taken place. Then at some time during disturbances in the latter half of the 7th century, the sculptures representing living creatures were excised or hidden. Some rebuilding activity, however, took place and the great church was shortened and its floor raised. Much was saved from the ruins and utilized in the new fabric, but new stone was needed as well, and this was taken from the Temple of Nectanebo. About one hundred years later, around 750 A.D. some attempt was made to rebuild the monastery, but the community was dwindling away and several buildings were deserted and had become covered with sand. From coins discovered at the Monastery of St. Jeremiah it is believed that the site was inhabited from the end of the 5th century until the middle of the 9th century.

The Monastery was excavated in 1908-1910 by J. E. Quibell. The ambon (pulpit), niches, capitals and friezes have been removed from the site to the Coptic Museum in Old Cairo.

The Church of the Holy Virgin at Ma'âdi

The Church of the Holy Virgin Mary is situated at one of the most beautiful sites on the banks of the Nile in Ma'âdi. Proceed from Cairo along the corniche to the suburb of Ma'âdi (13 km.). The Church of the Holy Virgin, known as the Dair al-'Adhrâ, is situated 300 metres south of the Ma'âdi Yacht Club. The church with its three Coptic domes is typical of Coptic churches.

> According to an oral tradition, the church was built on the site of a synagogue. It was from this site, that the Holy Family travelled by boat to Upper Egypt, and the stairs leading down to the Nile, 50 metres north of the church, are said to be the stairs which were used by the Holy Family.

The present church building dates back to the 18th century. The church is entered through an outer and an inner court. The three haikals are dedicated to the Holy Virgin (centre), St. Michael (north) and St. George (south). The baptistery is situated in the south-west corner of the narthex (1958). The northern sanctuary is presently used as a storage place for candles.

The church is noteworthy on account of its many good icons, though most of them belong to the 19th century. In the small Ladies Chamber on the south side of the sanctuary there are two bolsters with relics of unknown saints. These relics were recovered from the ancient Church of St. George at Helwân.

The Ruins of the Monastery of St. Arsenius on Gabal Tûrah

Coming from Cairo, one proceeds along the Nile corniche via Ma'âdi to Tûrah. At Tûrah, one turns to the left and

follows the road through the village of Tûrah as far as the Shell station, near the railway station of Cotsica. Turn toward the east, and follow the road under the railway-bridge and take a left turn, passing the Muslim cemetery of Tûrah. Continue on the unpaved road, passing several quarries, and ascend the Gabal Tûrah. After 2 km. from the Shell station, there is a road-fork. Follow the road on the left and drive as far as possible. Ascend the summit of Gebel Tûrah on foot and walk in the general direction of the Mamluk Tower. Pass through and cross the Wâdî al-Tîh with its numerous caves and subterranean quarries. Note the remains of hieroglyphs and coloured bas-reliefs which are still preserved.

South of the Wâdî al-Tîh and situated on a terrace overlooking the Nile Valley is the Monastery of St. Arsenius, known also as the Dair al-Kusair (the Monastery of the little Castle) or the Dair al-Baghl (the Monastery of the Mule), because a mule used to carry water from the Nile to the Monastery.

The ruins of the monastery are most impressive. A small chapel, the niche of which is still preserved, is of great interest because of the Coptic writing and drawings of animals on the wall of the niche. In one of the more important subterranean churches, one can still observe the remains of polychrome wall paintings on plaster. The dimensions of the monastery can be seen from the remaining walls. The fire place is situated on the north side, the oil-press on the west side, the cemetery on the south side of the enclosure.

St. Arsenius was a native of Rome, and teacher of the two princes Arcadius and Honorius, the sons of Theodosius the Great. Arsenius fled from the royal palace (about 394 A.D.) and went to the Desert of Scetis, where he became a disciple of St. John Colobos. After the raid on Scetis in 408 A.D., St. Arsenius fled to Tûrah, where he spent altogether 12 years. He died in 449 A.D. Among his disciples were Daniel, his biographer, to whom he bequeathed his hair shirt, and Alexander and Zoilus.

Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) refers to the Monastery of St. Arsenius and mentions a great festival at which

many people assembled. « Below this church on the mountain top, there was another church, hewn out in the rock with the pickaxe, and in it there is an altar. The monastery is on the upper part of the mountain and stands on a terrace, on a peak of the mountain, and is fairly constructed and commands a beautiful view. It has a well hewn in the rock, from which water is drawn. In the monastery there are excellent pictures, of extremely skillful and admirable execution. The road to this monastery from Misr is difficult, but in the southern side the ascent and descent are easy.

« The patriarch Eustathius founded in this monastery the Church of the Apostles, and he founded a cell for the bishops. The monastery is in the possession of the Melkites, and contains a body of their monks. In this monastery there are eight churches, and they are enclosed within a wall. The Church of the Apostles was destroyed by al-Hâkim in 1010 A.D., and a band of the common people came here and seized the coffins of the dead and the timbers from the ruins. Afterwards it was decreed that the monks should restore the ruined building, and al-Yasal assigned to the monastery sixteen feddans of land. — On one occasion, a mob of Muslims went up, and by a ruse induced the monks to open the gate to them, whereupon they entered and sacked the monastery, and killed some of the monks ». In the 13th cent. the monastery contained only five monks in poor circumstances. In former times, however, there were in the monastery and in the caves nearly six thousand monks. In the 14th century, the monastery was still occupied by monks.

By the 16th century, the monastery was deserted. The account of Basil Pozniakov, a Russian merchant (1558-1561), is interesting in this connection. « We stayed in Old Cairo four days with the Patriarch Joachim, and from there we set out for the Monastery of St. Arsenius, which lies on a rocky and high mountain. In this monastery there are caves cut into the rock where the monks live. The monastery was very beautiful with very beautiful and lofty stone-built cells. Now, however, it remains deserted on account of the Bedouins».

In the proximity of the ruins of the monastery, about 2,500 pages of Greek manuscripts were discovered, when in August 1941 the British Army cleaned a large cave at the foot of the mountain for use as an ammu-

nition depot. More or less complete, these manuscripts represent eight books, until then almost entirely unknown. Two of them contain excerpts of the writings of Origen (among those is the actual verbatim transcription of a debate between Origen, Heraclides and the bishops over the issue of the Trinity and the human soul, transcribed by a secretary), five books contain the writings of Didymus the Blind, the spiritual grandchild of Origen. These books contain primarily commentaries and transcriptions of lectures on the Holy Scriptures, written by a pupil or by a secretary. Probably, the manuscripts of Tûrah formed part of the library of the Monastery of St. Arsenius, and were brought to the cave from the scriptorium by someone, perhaps on account of the heretical character of the authors, for both authors were condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 553 A.D. Though many of the papyri are scattered all over the world, the majority are kept in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Lit.: Doutreleau, Louis, « Les papyrus de Toura », *Rech. de Science rel.*, XLIII (1955), 61 ff.

Doutreleau, Louis, « Vie et survie de Didyme l'Aveugle du IVe siècle à nos jours ». *Les Mardis de Dar el-Salam, 1956-1957.* (1959), 89-92.

Gesché, Adolphe, La *Christologie du 'Commentaire sur les Psaumes' découvert à Toura.* Gembloux, 1962.

Liesenborghs, Leo, *Papyrus Turah in Ecclesiasten. Loewen,* 1943.

Philippidou, Nicolas, Historia tou epi tou orous Toura monasterion. Alexandria, 1936.

Scherer, J., *Entretien d'Origine avec Hiéraclide et les évêques ses collègues sur le Père, le Fils et l'âme.* Cairo, 1949.

The Hermitages on Gabal Tûrah

After having visited the Monastery of St. Arsenius, one may proceed further southwards for about one kilometre. It is advisable to keep close to the western edge of the summit. Here, numerous caves and hermitages dating back to the 5th century can be visited. Note the ancient arches which lead to the hermitages. Utmost care should be exercised while climbing into the caves.

Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) refers to many caves, hewn in the rock, which also form their roof ; one of them is the cave of St. Arsenius, which was made for him, and it contains the stone which he used as a pillar.

The Church of St. Barsum the Naked at Ma'sara

The Church of St. Barsum the Naked (Barsûm al-'Arîan) can be reached from Cairo by following the corniche to Helwân as far as the village of Ma'sara, which is situated between Tûrah and Helwân. Before crossing the Ma'sara canal, turn to the left and follow the canal for 500 metres, until one reaches a small mosque on the right. Here, turn sharp to the left, and after 300 metres, the church comes to sight.

The Church of St. Barsum has three haikals, of which, however, only the central haikal is being used. South of the nave is the famous shrine of the Saint, which is the object of the annual pilgrimages. The shrine contains the tomb of St. Barsum as well as several icons, the most famous being a representation of St. Barsum. The baptistery is situated in the south-western corner of the church.

St. Barsum, son of al-Wagî Mufaddal of Cairo, defrauded by his uncle of his patrimony, became a monk and entered the solitary life in the crypt of the Church of St. Mercurius in Old Cairo, where there was a serpent, of which the people were afraid. This reptile was overcome by the saint. He lived in the crypt for twenty years practicing many austerities. During periods of oppression, St. Barsum ascended the roof of the church, and there openly offered intercessions. Thereupon, he was arrested and carried off to prison. Then he was sent to the Monastery of Shahran at Ma'sara, where he dwelt in the courtyard on a heap of dust and ashes. Many miracles are recorded of him, in some of which Sultan al-Nâsir (1294-1341) figures. St. Barsum died in 1317. The site of the Church of St. Barsum can be identified with the ancient Monastery of St. Mercurius, the Dair Shahrân, which is mentioned by Abû Sâlih, and which was built by Abba Poemen in the days of al-Hâkim. It is said that the caliph often visited this monastery.

The mûlid of St. Barsum takes place annually on September 27 in the village of Ma'sara.

Lit. : Daressy, M. G., « Indicateur Topographique du 'Livre des Perles Enfouies et du Mystère Précieux, » *Bull. Inst. Franç. Arch. Orient.*, XIII, (2), 201.

Qiman al-'Arûs

The village of Qiman al-'Arûs, where St. Antony the Great was born in 251 A.D., is situated 94 km. south of Cairo on the west bank of the Nile, and west of the Cairo-Aswân railroad. The village is entirely surrounded by cultivated land. The people of the village, though today entirely Muslim, are still conscious of the fact that St. Antony was born there. In the centre of the village is a large rectangular mosque. There is good reason to believe that at one time this was occupied by a church. In the courtyard of the mosque there are a few ancient columns which, according to the testimony of the villagers, belonged to the ancient Church of St. Antony in Qiman al-'Arûs.

The estate of St. Antony, which extended over an area of 52 feddans, was situated about 5 km. south of Qiman al-'Arûs. The monks of the Dependency of St. Antony at Bûsh maintain that the land is sacred. The estate of St. Antony, which according to tradition has never been divided, is presently administered by Hussain Gabr of Qiman al-'Arûs.

Lit. : Munier, H., « Les Monuments Coptes d'après les Explorations du Père Jullien, » *Bull. Soc. Arch. Copte.* VI, 147-151.

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Antony

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Antony (Dair Anbâ Antunius) is situated in the town of Bûsh, on the west bank of the Nile, 120 km. south of Cairo. To reach the dependency, one passes through the town and travels 1½ km. in westerly direction after leaving the main agricultural road. The present buildings date from the year 1880, and they were erected under the supervision of Abûnâ Yûsâb al-Antûnî.

According to tradition, the original property of the monastery consisted of 52 feddans which were owned by

the father of St. Antony in Qiman al-'Arûs, in the vicinity of al-Wasta. The dependency was visited by Wansleben (1672) and by Granger (1730).

The Church of St. Antony (1878) was built by Abûnâ Basiliûs.

The church has three haikals. The southern haikal is dedicated to St. Michael, the central haikal to St. Antony, and the northern haikal to St. George. On the north wall of the church hangs a large picture of the Patriarch Cyril IV. The episcopal throne, which is placed on the north side of the central aisle, is very elaborate and decorative.

The Church of St. Antony attracts many who are sick and suffering, and who hope to be healed through the intercessions of St. Antony or St. George.

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Paul

Situated in the vicinity of the Dependency of the Monastery of St. Antony, about 200 metres north-west of it, is the Dependency of the Monastery of St. Paul (Dair Anbâ Bûlâ). Compared with the Dependency of the Monastery of St. Antony, that of St. Paul is unpretentious. In every aspect, the Dependency of the Monastery of St. Paul does not display the prosperity of that of its sister monastery.

The present buildings, comprising the episcopal residence and a few cells, were erected in or about 1875, though the present Church of St. Paul was already in existence in 1870. This church has three haikals, of which the southern haikal is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the central haikal to St. Paul, and the northern haikal to St. Michael. The episcopal throne is placed on the northern side of the choir, and is very simple in comparison to the throne in the Church of St. Antony. The arrangement of the cells is the same as that in the Dependency of St. Antony.

The Church of St. Antony at Dair al-Maimûn

At one time a monastery, today Dair al-Maimûn is a small village, situated in a palm grove on the east bank of the Nile. It can be reached by car from Cairo via Ma'âdi-

Helwân-al-Saff to Kuraimât (108 km.). From Kuraimât, one follows a desert track along the Nile for another 11 km. It is advisable to keep close to the Nile.

At the beginning of the 13th century the monastery was still inhabited, and Abû Sâlih mentions the keep, a garden, a mill, and a wine-press. Al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) identified it as the Monastery of al-Gummaizah. Dair al-Maimûn was visited by Wansleben (1673), Norden (18th cent), Russegger (1836), Giamberardini (1955).

Two churches, the Church of St. Antony and the Church of St. Mercurius are the only remnants of a once distinguished monastic settlement.

The Church of St. Antony has two haikals, the centre one is dedicated to St. Antony, the northern one to St. George. The church is built above the cave in which St. Antony used to live prior to the establishment of the monastery. The cave, in the south side of the church, about 1.95 m. in depth, 1.75 m. in length and 0.80 m. in width is covered by a wooden door placed into the floor. The only interesting object in the church, apart from the cave, is the haikal screen, which shows the date of 1264 A.M. or 1529-1530 A.D.

The Church of St. Mercurius is much older than the present building of its sister church. A stone haikal screen divides the sanctuary from the choir. To the north of the haikal, there is a staircase leading to a bell-tower. The church is no longer used for Divine Services.

Lit.: Giamberardini, G., *S. Antonio Abate del Deserto*. Cairo, 1957.
Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts*. Cairo, 1961.

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin at Bayâd al-Nasâra

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin Mary (Dair al-'Adhrâ) at Bayâd al-Nasâra is situated on the east bank of the Nile, almost opposite the town of Bani Suef. To reach the monastery, travel along the Cairo-Asyût agricultural road to Bani Suef, where one crosses the first bridge on the left and

proceeds via the midân (main square) in easterly direction towards the Nile. At the eastern end of the main street leading to the river are several felucas, which can be engaged for the crossing. The monastery is situated about 2 km. north of Bani Suef.

The monastery is beautifully located immediately on the east bank of the Nile. It is enclosed by a high wall. The cells, at one time occupied by monks, are arranged back onto the wall. The old church has been completely torn down, and a new church dedicated to the Holy Virgin has been built. The new Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary has two haikals which are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Dimiana (south). The new church was consecrated by Bishop Athanasius in January 1963.

Several granite socles and four granite columns are the only remains of the ancient church.

In 1965, Bishop Athanasius of Bani Suef established at the former monastery a retreat house for the Coptic Order of the Daughters of St. Mary. Also, Bayâd al-Nasâra serves as a training centre of the Rural Diakonia, where artisans, Sunday School teachers and cantors are trained.

A large mûlid is held annually from August 7 to August 22 in honour of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Christian Churches of Bani Suef

The Coptic Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Virgin has three altars dedicated to St. George, the Holy Virgin and St. Mercurius. Nearby there is situated a large multi-purpose Community Centre, which can claim to be the best and most efficient centre in Egypt. In addition to the training centre for girls in Bani Suef the diocese of Bani Suef operates a training centre in the village of Bani Bakhît. There are several Coptic Orthodox churches, Catholic (Franciscan) and Protestant churches in Bani Suef. The Greek Orthodox churches are dedicated to the Three Hierarchs and to St. George.

The Church of St. George at Bibâ

The town of Bibâ is situated 22 km. south of Bani Suef. The Church of St. George, which attracts annually large numbers of pilgrims for the mûlid of St. George, is situated on the banks of the Nile in the eastern part of the town. Coming from Bani Suef, one crosses the railroad tracks and proceeds in easterly direction, passing the midân (main square), to the banks of the Nile.

The church is situated in a large enclosure. An outer and an inner court provide for the pilgrims at the time of the mûlid. A Coptic school is situated north of the church.

The Church of St. George is a 19th century construction with modern wall paintings. The church has one altar which is dedicated to St. George. North of the sanctuary is a prayer chamber for men which is dedicated to the Holy Virgin. South of the sanctuary is a prayer chamber for women which is dedicated to St. Antony.

The remains of a mediaeval ivory-inlaid haikal screen are incorporated into the modern and artistically inferior screen. Two 17th century icons of the Resurrection and the Crucifixion can be seen on the inner walls of the sanctuary.

The mûlid in honour of St. George is observed annually a week prior to the Feast of the Ascension, normally in May.

Lit. : Leeder, S. H., *Modern Sons of the Pharaohs.* London, 1914, 137.

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Samuel

The Dependency of the Monastery of St. Samuel consisting of a church, a guesthouse, and some cells and storage facilities, is situated in the village of al-Zawara, west of Maghâgha.

The dependency, which is situated at the north-western end of al-Zawara, can only be reached by donkey or on foot from Bani Wallîms (2.5 km.). It is advisable to park one's motor car in the hospital yard at Bani Wallîms near the edge of the desert.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary has three haikals of which the central one is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the northern haikal to St. Michael, and the southern one to St. Gabriel.

West of the church are the stables for the camels and donkeys, which are employed to send provisions to the desert monastery.

The Church of St. Theodore at Bahnasa

The village of Bahnasa, today predominantly Muslim, is situated at the edge of the desert and the cultivated land on the west bank of the Bahr Yûsuf Canal, about 22 km. west of Bani Mazâr. Only very few architectural fragments point to the distinguished history and tradition of this important cultural and early ecclesiastical centre. Bahnasa can be conveniently reached by car from Bani Mazâr.

The principal church of Bahnasa is dedicated to St. Theodore, who is highly venerated in this section of the country (*cf.* the mûlid of Amîr Tadrûs at Dair al-Sanqûria which is situated 8 km. south of Bahnasa). The church which was built in 1923 by Ibrâhîm Ghattâs and Abûnâ Butrus Ishâq, is of little interest, except for the modern Byzantine iconostasis. The church has three haikals, which are dedicated to the Holy Virgin, St. Theodore and the Archangel. A small modern necropolis is found in the church yard north of the sanctuary.

The inhabitants of Bahnasa, *i.e.* the ancient Oxyrhynchus, believe that the Holy Family, on their Flight to Egypt, visited their village. In the 4th century, Oxyrhynchus, where formerly the fish was worshipped, served as one of the principal monastic settlements, and the author of the *Historia Monachorum* speaks of 10,000 monks and 20,000 virgins under the Bishop of Oxyrhynchus. The great temples, in which the ancient gods were worshipped, were transformed into monasteries, and in addition, there were twelve churches. This incredible number of fathers and virgins was « enough to turn the town into a kind of holy city, where monks congested the streets and seemed to outnumber everyone else, an aspect of 4th century Oxyrhynchus one

would not suspect from the papyri that have come from that place ». The town was so full of monasteries, that « monkish songs were heard in every quarter ». In the 6th century, the town was still a major episcopal see with its own hospital.

Bahnasa reached international fame on account of the successful expeditions of Drs. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt of the Egypt Exploration Fund. Among the earliest discoveries were the two series of the *Sayings of Jesus,* the *Logia Jesu,* which were published in 1897 and 1904. For the Bible scholar, perhaps the most noteworthy material constitutes the 3rd century fragments of *Matt.* I : 1-9, 12, 14-20 (*Oxyrh. Pap.* 2) and the frag. of *John* I, XV, XVI, XX (*Oxyrh. Pap.* 208 and 1228).

In addition to the Christian material, Oxyrhynchus yielded a wealth of pre-Christian manuscripts, *e.g.* poems of Pindar, fragments of Sappho and Alcaeus, substantial pieces of Alcman, Ibycus and Corinna, the greater part of the *Ichneutae* of Sophocles, extensive remains of the *Hypsipyle* of Euripides and large portions of several plays of Menander. Important also is the so-called *Hellenica Oxyrhynchus,* the author of which is not determined with certainty, but not improbably was Ephorus. A vita of Euripides by Satyrus, written in the form of a dialogue, is an interesting specimen of popular biography. An epitome of some of the lost books of Livy constitute the chief literary find in Latin.

Lit. : Egypt Exploration Society, *Archaeological Reports* (1896-1899) (1902-1907).

The Church of St. Theodore at Dair al-Sanqûrîyah

The Church of St. Theodore is situated on the eastern bank of the Yûsuf Canal approximately 20 km. west of Bani Mazâr. Coming from Bani Mazâr, one proceeds first through the town and then in westerly direction as far as Ma'sarat Haggag (18 km.), and there, one turns towards the north. The domes of the church are visible on the left hand.

One enters the inner court, the necropolis and the church either through a gate in the northern or in the western wall.

The Church of St. Theodore is situated in the south-eastern part of the enclosure.

The present Church of St. Theodore (Amîr Tadrûs) is built upon the site of an ancient monastery. Noteworthy are the fourteen red granite columns, three of which have acanthus-leaf capitals. The columns hold the roof of the northern and western porch.

The church has three haikals which are dedicated to the Holy Virgin (north), St. Theodore (centre) and St. George (south). The haikal screen is noteworthy because of the ivory inlaid designs. The icons above the haikal screen represent from north to south : St. Michael, the Crucifixion, the Holy Virgin, St. Theodore, the Resurrection, St. Theodore, the Mystical Supper, the Baptism of Christ, and St. Michael. Four marble columns divide the nave into three almost equal sections. The column in the south-west corner is interesting because of the cross which adorns the acanthus-leaf capital. The ambon, which is decorated with icons of the Twelve Apostles, is attached to the north-western column. The baptistery is situated in the north-eastern part of the church.

West of the church is an enclosed necropolis with eight tombs belonging to the family of Mikhâîl Athanâsîûs, the restorer of the church. The elaborate shrine of Mikhâîl Athanâsîûs is situated in the north-eastern part of the inner court. The key to this shrine is with the family in Cairo.

In 1969, Bishop Athanâsîûs of Bani Suef established in Dair al-Sanqûrîyah a leadership training-centre for the Rural Diakonia.

The Church of the Holy Virgin at Gabal al-Tair

One of the most beautiful churches in Egypt is the Church of the Holy Virgin (Dair al-'Adhrâ) at Gabal al-Tair, known also as the Convent of the Pulley.

In order to visit this famous church, it is advisable to take a sailing boat (felucca) from Minya or from Samâlût,

since there is no road on the east bank of the Nile. To reach the church by car from Minya, one travels north on the agricultural road to Bani Suef. After 20 km. from Minya, one turns eastwards and crosses a small bridge and drives for one kilometre in an easterly direction towards the centre of the small village of Bayahû, which is situated directly on the west bank of the Nile. One can cross the Nile from Bayahû to Gabal al-Tair by sailing boat (no regular service), though one should allow a maximum of two hours, for the crossing depends on the wind. Having reached the east bank of the Nile, one climbs the cliff (166 stairs) and reaches the ancient Church of the Holy Virgin, which is reputed to have been built by the Empress Helena. A memorial tablet on the west wall of the church indicates that the first church was built in the year 44 A.M. or 328 A.D., and that it was repaired by Severus, the Bishop of Minya, in 1938.

> The Church of the Holy Virgin is mentioned by Abû Sâlih who said, « ... this church is hewn out of the mountain side, and in the rock is the mark of the palm of the hand of the Lord Christ which was made when He touched the mountain... He grasped the mountain, when it worshipped before Him, and restored it to its place with His hand, so that the mark of His palm remains impressed upon the mountain ».
>
> The Dair al-'Adhrâ was inhabited by monks until the middle of the 19th century. This is substantiated by Wansleben (1672), F. L. Norden (1740), Richardson (1816), Henniker (1819) and Lord Curzon (1838).

The Church of the Holy Virgin is partly (haikal and choir) cut out of the solid rock, and may be regarded as subterranean. The choir is raised about one metre above the nave, and is approached by a double flight of steps. The deeply recessed niches are characteristic of ancient Upper Egyptian churches. Probably the most ancient part of the church is the narthex.

The Church of the Holy Virgin attracts annually ten thousands of pilgrims, who for the Feast of the Assumption

of the Holy Virgin (August 22) come by feluccas from as far as Minya, Asyût, and even from Cairo.

Several hundred feet north of the church is the cell of the Ethiopian hermit Abûnâ 'Abd al-Thâlûth al-Habashî.

Lit.: Ayrout, H., «Le Pèlerinage d'el Adra,» *Cahiers d'Histoire Egyptienne*. IX, 1-2. (1957), 65-67.

Curzon, R., *Visits to the Monasteries in the Levant*. London, 1847.

Meinardus, O., *In the Steps of the Holy Family from Bethlehem to Upper Egypt*. Cairo, 1963.

Norden, F. L., *Travels in Egypt and Nubia*. London, 1757.

Wansleben, J. M., *Nouvelle Relation en forme de Journal d'un voyage fait en Egypte en 1672 et 1673*. Paris, 1677.

2. — THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES BETWEEN MINYA AND ASYUT

The Christian Churches of Minya

Minya is the episcopal see of the Coptic Orthodox Bishop of Minya and Ashmunain. The Coptic Orthodox Cathedral is dedicated to St. Mark. In addition, there are the following Coptic Orthodox Churches in Minya. The Church of St. Theodore, the Church of the Holy Virgin, the Church of St. George and the Church of St. Menas.

The Greek Orthodox Churches in Minya are dedicated to St. John the Baptist and to St. Naum the Prophet.

Minya is also the episcopal see of the Coptic Catholic bishop of Hermopolis. The Catholics have a Cathedral, the Church of St. Mark and the Church of St. Theresa. There are three Coptic Evangelical Churches in Minya. Moreover, the Coptic Evangelical Church maintains in Minya a Literacy Centre.

The Ruins of the Monastery of Abû Fanah

The ruins of the Monastery of Abû Fanah (Epiphanius, or the Monastery of the Cross according to Maspero) are situated at the edge of the desert near Qasr Hôr. From Itlî-

dim (railway station), one proceeds in westerly direction to Qasr Hôr, where one crosses the Bahr Yûsuf. Continue for another 2 km. towards the edge of the desert, the monastery is situated about 1 km. in the desert.

The ruins of the monastery extend over a wide area, which is covered with small pieces of pottery, potsherds and bricks. Pieces of grey granite, which are spread about in considerable quantity, may lead one to conclude that this was the site of an ancient temple. On a small hill, not far from the entrance, are the ruins of a square building, which at one time served as the qasr.

The church is the only building which has survived the destruction of the monastery. The three naves are separated by twelve pillars. The semi-circular apsis is adorned with small pillars. Moreover, there are two side-chapels. Attached to the church was a bakery. The baptistery was situated on the south side. The church is decorated with numerous wall paintings of crosses, small and large and of various designs.

The Cave of Abû Fanah is situated about 80 metres to the right of the ruined monastery.

Abû Fanah (4th-5th cent.) was inspired to the anchoritic life by hermits, whom he visited in the Libyan Desert. Following their example, he entered the wilderness near Ashmunain. Apart from his ascetic exercises, he is known for his concern for the sick and the poor and his many miracles. It is said that he predicted the date of the death of Theodosius the Great. The monastery was built in his memory.

Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) mentions the church of Abû Fanah which was restored by al-Rashîd Abû'l-Fadl. Al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) speaks of a Monastery of Abû Fanah, built of stone, and being of fine architecture. In former times, there were a thousand monks here : in the 15th cent., however, only two monks survived. Fr. Jullien (19th cent.) noted that the priest of Qasr Hôr had

cleaned up the debris in the church and used the church for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Lit. : Munier, H., « Les Monuments Coptes d'après les explorations du Père Jullien, » *Bull. Soc. Arch. Copte,* VI, 147-151.

Monneret de Villard, U., *Les Couvents près de Sohag.* Milan, 1925, I, 62.

The Church of Apa Hor at Sawâda

The Church of Apa Hor, known as the Dair Apa Hor or the Dair al-Sawâda, is situated in the village of Dair Apa Hor, 4 km. south of Minya, on the east bank of the Nile opposite of Mâqûsa, and 1 km. east of Sawâda at the foot of the mountain range. For visiting the church, it is advisable to take a felucca from Minya to Sawâda and then proceed by donkey to Dair Apa Hor.

The Church of Apa Hor is situated at the very foot of the mountain before entering the village and the necropolis, which are built upon the western slope of the mountain range. Since the church is not too easy to find, it is advisable to engage a guide in Sawâda.

The Church of Apa Hor, which is subterranean and cut into the rock, is entered through a narrow tunnel. Having passed through the tunnel, one descends several steps and reaches the nave which is almost completely dark. Four pillars divide the central nave from the narrower side naves. A dome surmounts the nave. The upper east wall above the haikal screen is adorned with a cross and two birds. The tomb of Apa Hor is said to be situated above the haikal of Apa Hor. The church has two haikals, which are dedicated to Apa Hor (north) and to the Holy Virgin (south). The wooden haikal screen is noteworthy because of the beautiful ivory work. The icon of Apa Hor in the northern haikal is dated 1554 A.M. (1838 A.D.). The well is situated in the north-western part of the church, north of the tunnel.

The Upper Church of St. Dimiana is situated above the cave-church. At one time, the church had three altars, though nowadays only the central altar dedicated to St. Dimiana is being used. The haikal screen is inferior to that of

the cave-church, yet interesting on account of the inlaid smoked wood. Above the haikal screen are icons of the Twelve Apostles, two archangels and Christ. The icons in this church represent St. Dimiana (19th century) and the Flight into Egypt (1859 A.D.), and are of inferior quality.

From the outside of the church one can climb upon the roof of the cave-church. In the immediate proximity of the dome, next to the well, there is a beautiful marble frieze, 1 m. long and 30 cm. wide. This frieze (probably 5th century) serves as a threshold.

The church attracts annually large numbers of pilgrims from Minya, who, for the annual mawâlid, inhabit the many tombs of the large necropolis. The visitor may want to note the tomb with the following inscription :

> « Sacred to the memory of Guy Weldon Baker, Yousbashee H. H. Coast Guards, Son of Lewa Charles Baker Pasha, V.C., who died of Cholera at Membal near Samaloot, July 27, 1896, aged 25. This tomb was a gift of Bishai Effendi Antonios of Minya by whom it was built ».

The site of the Church of Apa Hor is of great antiquity, and a visit is recommended. Apa Hor, a young monk who lived during the latter part of the third century, desired martyrdom and went to Pelusium where he made his public confession of faith. The governor inflicted many tortures upon him, but at length, the saint's steadfastness caused the governor and his family to embrace the Christian Faith. Later, another governor sent Apa Hor to Antinoë, where, after much torture and suffering, he was beheaded.

The Eastern Laurae south of Minya

At least seven monastic centres are known to us on the east bank of the Nile south of Minya : the tombs of Bani Hasan, the quarries of Manhari, the caves of Speos Artemidos, the quarries of Dair al-Dîk, the quarries of Shaikh Abâda, the quarries of Abû Hinnis and those of al-Barsha.

From the 5th century onwards large numbers of monks settled around the city of Antinoë. Abû Sâlîh and al-Maqrîzî

spak of five monasteries east of Antinoë, and in addition they refer to numerous churches in this region. The northernmost settlement included the Dair Sunbât, which was studied and described by Clédat. A little further to the south and situated at the very edge of the cliffs, there is the Dair al-Nasâra. Still further to the south, there is the Dair al-Dík, an extensive laura as well as a monastery. These monasteries were visited by Jomard, Wilkinson, Gayet, Clédat and Lefebvre. The whole region east of Antinoë was recently studied by Fr. Maurice Martin, s.j.

The Hermitages of Bani Hasan

Those who visit the famous tombs of Bani Hasan, which are situated about 3 km. south of Abû Qurqâs on the east bank of the Nile, should not fail to note, that here, as well as in Thebes, Christian anchorites settled in the Pharaonic monuments and converted tombs and temples into chapels and churches.

The tombs are hewn out of the living rock, and are situated high up in the mountain. The tombs are to be assigned to the 11th and 12th dynasty. Of the many tombs which in the 4th to 6th century were inhabited by Christian anchorites, tomb 23 of Nouternekht (nobleman) might be the best example. On the east wall of the tomb are Coptic inscriptions and a Coptic alphabet. It has been suggested that this tomb served as a school.

Other tombs in which we discover Coptic graffiti are : 2, 3, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 32 and 33.

Lit. : Newberry, P. E., *Beni Hassan II*, Egypt Exploration Fund. London, 1894.

The Valley of the Anchorites near Speos Artémidos

Passing Speos Artémidos, a temple built by Thutmosis III and Hatshepsut, and continuing for 1 1/2 km. in southeasterly direction, one will approach the Valley of the Anchorites. Here, several caves were inhabited by monks and hermits as can be seen from crosses which are engraved on the

walls. The remains of mud-brick walls in the caves lead one to believe that a sizable community of hermits resided here.

Lit.: Newberry, P. E., *Beni Hassan II.* Egypt Explorations Fund. London, 1894.

Dair al-Dîk

The monastery, which is built of crude bricks, is situated near the banks of the Nile opposite the Island of Shiba. The measurements of the ruins are 146 by 92 m. The size of the construction as well as the remains of the massive walls betray its significance during its occupation. The Laura of Dair al-Dîk extends for over 1.5 km towards the north of the monastery. This laura consists of at least sixteen cells and a cave-church, more or less in the centre of the laura. In addition, there is a cave-monastery with two stories hewn in the rock. The church is noteworthy because of its numerous wall paintings of crosses.

The laura of Dair al-Dîk, like the other laurae in this vicinity may date back to the 5th or 6th century. The founder of this settlement was Abba Apollo. The monastery, on the other hand, may not have been built until the 10th century. The large number of Coptic (also Greek) graffiti on the walls of the caves, the rock monastery and the church were studied by Jacques Jarry in 1968 and 1969.

Lit.: Martin, Maurice, « La Laure de Dêr al-Dîk à Antinoé, » *Bibliothèque d'Etudes Coptes,* VIII, 1971.

Ibid., « Laures et Ermitages du Désert d'Egypte, » *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph,* XLII, 3, 1966, pp. 183-198.

The Ancient Churches east of Shaikh Abâda

About 18 km. south of the famous Tombs of Bani Hasan, opposite the town of al-Rôda, is situated on the east bank of the Nile the village of Shaikh Abâda. To the east of the village, which is beautifully located amidst palms, are the ruins of the ancient Antinoupolis or Antinoë, the town, which was established by Emperor Hadrian in 130 A.D. in honour of his favourite Antinous.

The handsome youth is said to have drowned himself here, to fulfill the oracle which predicted a heavy loss to the emperor and so to prevent a more serious disaster.

To the north-east of Shaikh 'Abâda in the mountain, there are several quarries, which in this locality form a semi-circle. In the centre of the semi-circle are the remains of a Christian monastery, the walls of which were built with crude bricks. At least nine cells are situated in the vicinity of the monastery, especially on the slopes to the south of the monastic ruins. Some of the cells are adorned with graffiti of crosses or the alpha and omega.

Around the semi-circle are the ruins of two ancient churches, of which the one in the centre was attached to a monastery, which was built behind the church. A part of the building was cut into the rock, whereas the other part was enclosed with a brick wall. Some of the cells are still visible.

In the church situated furthest to the south, one still discovers the remains of wall paintings of saints and some Coptic graffiti, as well as a cross enclosed by a double circle.

The walls of the central church also show several wall paintings. The niche is surmounted by a dome. This niche, in turn, contains three small niches which are separated from each other by columns. A small door gives access to the court of the monastery, where one still sees the remains of the cells which were built around the court.

The Mortuary Chapel of St. Mary in the Necropolis

The Church of St. Mary is situated approximately 2 km. east of the village of Shaikh 'Abâda.

At one time a sizable building at the eastern edge of the ancient town, the Church of St. Mary has been partially restored in 1934. The altar-room is locked with an iron gate, and it is important to notify the *ghaffir* at Shaikh 'Abâda,

who is in charge of the key. The wall paintings on the eastern and southern walls are badly damaged. On the southern wall, one can still see traces of a painting of Theodosia between St. Colluthus and St. Mary. Stored in the altar-room are three socles and one column.

The ground walls of the large ancient church are still discernible. South-west of the present building is the baptismal font.

The Monastery of St. John at Dair Abû Hinnis

A few kilometres to the south of Shaikh 'Abâda and the ruins of Antinoë on the east bank of the Nile, there is situated the village of Dair Abû Hinnis with the Church of St. John the Short. The village is inhabited largely by Copts. The village can be most easily approached by crossing the Nile at al-Rôda. The key to the Church of St. John the Short is with the village priest who lives almost next to the church.

From an architectural point of view, this church has attracted considerable attention because it shows most clearly the changes that were made from a church of the basilican order to one roofed with domes, and obstructed by clumsy masses of brickwork in order to support them. The church consists of a narthex, a nave and the sanctuaries. The nave which is divided into three bays is covered by three domes. The piers supporting these domes are so large as to block the interior completely. The southern part of the nave is the gynaikion, the central part is reserved for men and the eastern part for the choir. The church has two haikals, which are dedicated to the Holy Virgin and to St. John the Short. West of the northern haikal is the baptistery. The apsis walls are ornamented with three niches. The interior of the church is rather dark. The 18th century icon of St. John the Short was a gift of Anbâ Dimitrîus, 111th Patriarch of Alexandria. Visitors should note the twenty columns with acanthus-leaf capitals and the temple fragments which were used in the construction of the church. The icons in the haikal of the Holy Virgin (north) represent SS. John the Short and Macarius, and an inferior copy of the Madonna

di San Sisto by Raphael. The icons in the haikal of St. John the Short show the Holy Virgin (17th century), St. John the Short (1837), and a Greek Jerusalem Proskynitarion. Attached to the haikal screen is a modern print of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Tradition asserts, as is the case with so many churches in the Nile Valley, that the church was built during the reign of St. Helena. Al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.), refers to the Monastery of Abûl-Na'na' which stands near Ansina (Antinoë) and is one of the oldest buildings of that city, its church is in a tower, not on the ground, and the monastery bears the name of St. John the Short.

Lit. : Galdas, Adib, *Village Reborn*. Lit-Lit Field Reports, 1958.
Misail Bahr, *Tarikh al-Qaddis al-Anbâ Yunannis al-Qasîr*, Cairo, n.d.

The Collection of Coptica at Dair Abû Hinnis

While in Dair Abû Hinnis, one should not fail to visit the Coptic priest of the village, who has collected numerous items of historical interest. The collection contains Coptic and Arabic manuscripts, crosses and liturgical objects.

Lit. : Meinardus, O., « A Collection of Coptica at Dair Abû Hinnis », *Bull. de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*, XVIII, 1966, pp. 264-266.

The Cave-Church of St. John, east of Dair Abû Hinnis

The cave-church is part of an extensive laura of at least thirty-seven caves extending over a distance of more than two kilometers. Many of these caves are adorned with Christian graffiti.

The cave-church of St. John the Short is situated behind the village of Dair Abû Hinnis, about 3 km. to the south-east. After passing through the village, one enters the desert with its many cemeteries and follows the path leading eastwards to the mountain. The cave-church cannot be easily identified from a distance. The key to the church can be obtained from the Coptic priest in Dair Abû Hinnis. Once having reached the cave-church, the visitor will appreciate the scenic view upon the Nile Valley.

This church was built into two or three ancient caves. The narthex of the church is unusually large, and has a fine western entrance which is approached by a flight of steps from above. The church is very rich in wall paintings and thus has attracted many archaeologists. These paintings are all of the same style (6th or 7th century). Unfortunately, all paintings are seriously damaged insofar as the faces of the persons are purposely destroyed.

The room to the right has the following wall paintings : The Massacre of the Innocents with King Herod sitting on his throne in the Temple and assisting in the massacre. At the end of the wall are representations of Zachariah and Elizabeth, which may belong to the Massacre of the Innocents. The subsequent scenes show the Apparition of the Angel Gabriel to St. Joseph and the Flight into Egypt (the Holy Virgin, Christchild on an ass and St. Joseph). The wall paintings decorating the niche represent five persons including Christ and the Holy Virgin at the Wedding at Cana. Christ changes the water into wine with a stick.

The room to the left has a wall painting of the Resurrection of Lazarus. Other paintings show the life of Zachariah with the Angel Gabriel in the Temple. In addition to the major themes, there are numerous Coptic inscriptions on the walls.

Lit.: Cledat, J., « Notes Archéologiques et Philologiques, » *Bull. Inst. Franç. Arch. Orient.* II, 41-70.

Butler, A., *The Ancient Coptic Churches.* I, 364.

Jomard, E. F., *Description de l'Egypte,* Antiquités, IV, 272, xiv.

Klotzsche-Breitenbruch, L., « Zur Ikonographie des Bethlemitischen Kindermordes, » *Jahrbuch fuer Antike und Christentum.* XI-XII, 1968-69, pp. 104-115.

Sayce, A. H., " Coptic and early Christian Inscriptions in Upper Egypt, » *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology,* 1886, 175; 1887, 195.

The Monastery of St. Bishoi at Dair al-Barsha

The Monastery of St. Bishoi (Dair Anbâ Bishoî) is situated on the east bank of the Nile in the village of Dair al-Barsha about 4 km. south of Dair Anbâ Hinnis. Those

who are interested in visiting the Monastery of St. Bishoi are advised to cross the Nile at the village of al-Bayâdîya, 8 km. north of Mallawi, to the village of Dair Abû Hinnis. From Dair Abû Hinnis, one proceeds in southerly direction along the embankment. After 3 km., one turns to the east and proceeds towards the desert. The village of Dair al-Barsha is situated on the edge of the desert and the cultivated land. The Coptic Orthodox priest of the village has the key to the church of the monastery.

The monastery consists of the Church of St. Bishoi, which is situated in the north-eastern part of the monastery. West of the church are the ruins of monastic buildings. The well is situated to the north of the church. Moreover, there are the remains of a *saqiah* and a mill which are located in the southern part of the monastery.

The Monastery of St. Bishoi has an Upper and a Lower Church. The Lower Church, known as the Church of St. Bishoi, has three haikals which are dedicated to St. Bishoi, St. George and the Holy Virgin. The haikal screen, which is constructed of burnt brick, shows definite signs of antiquity. The screen is adorned with icons of St. Bishoi, St. George and the Holy Virgin. North of the haikal of St. Bishoi is a small Ladies' Chapel, and next to it the staircase leading to the Upper Church. The qurbân bakery is situated in the south-west corner, the baptistery in the north-west corner of the church.

In the southern part of the church are the tombs of two priests, who, according to tradition, were assassinated by bandits.

The Upper Church has two haikals, the stone haikal-screen shows the date of 1582 A.M. or 1866 A.D. The five domes of the Upper Church form the sign of a cross. The domes are beautifully decorated with stars, crosses and other geometrical designs. According to Johann Georg, Duke of Saxony, who visited the church in 1928, this ornamentation may belong to the 13th century. The walls of the haikals show several layers of wall paintings. Tradition relates, that the Upper Church, which is without doubt of greater anti-

quity than the Lower Church, served the local population as a place of refuge in times of danger and persecution.

According to a local oral tradition, the monastery was founded by St. Bishoi, who, following the sack of the Monastery of St. Bishoi in the Wâdî al-Natrûn settled in the Nile Valley. In the 6th and 7th century, the monastic community is said to have numbered over 1,000 monks. Monastic discipline, however, demandad that over 500 monks should live in the caves and hermitages in the mountains east of the monastery. To this day, many of the caves show traces of monastic habitation. The walls of the caves are decorated with numerous crosses and Coptic inscriptions.

The Church of St. Bishoi was regularly used until a few years ago. Nowadays, the church is only used on special occasions. Until very recently, the church was used for weddings on Saturday afternoons. Following the ceremony, the bride and the groom spent the wedding night in the sanctuary. After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, the newly married would return to their home.

Lit. : Johann Georg, *Neue Streifzuege durch die Kirchen und Kloester Aegyptens.* Leipzig, 1930.

The Hermitages at al-Barsha

Al-Barsha or Dair al-Nakhlah is a small village with a largely Christian population about 8 km. south of al-Rôda on the east bank of the Nile.

The hermitages, which are situated in ancient tombs, are located about 1 km. behind the village in the mountains. The tombs are scattered at all levels on the mountains on either side.

Just beyond Tomb 7 (north side of the wâdî) are several small quarries with Coptic graffiti, whereas the quarries on the south side of the wâdî contain tombs, which are decorated with Coptic crosses and the letters of alpha and omega. Whether a few solitaries or a colony of monks resided there is difficult to determine.

Lit. : Griffith, F. L., *El Bersheh*, II. Egypt Exploration Fund. London, n.d.

The Church in the Tomb of Urarna (Shaikh Sa'îd)

The rock tombs of Gabal Shaikh Sa'îd are situated south of the village of al-Barsha on the east bank of the Nile, almost opposite Mallawî. These tombs were chosen in very early times as one of the chief burial places for persons of distinction in the district.

One approaches the tombs from al-Barsha and will soon see the dark entrances here and there in the face of the cliff. (These tombs are also known as the Tombs of al-Barsha and Dair Abû Fâm).

The Tomb of Urarna was greatly wrecked by the Christians, who have covered the walls with plaster. The tomb was transformed into a Christian place for worship by making the two chambers of the tomb into one, destroying the reliefs, and decorating the walls with Christian paintings and finally constructing an apse at the back of the tomb. The walls are covered with sketches of St. George and the Dragon, Coptic graffiti and a Coptic cross.

Above the Tomb of Urarna is Tomb 39 which belongs to the 6th dynasty. The interior of this tomb affords a strange contrast to the other tombs. It is whitewashed, and the available space is occupied by arched recesses. The effect of the alterations made by the Copts has been to transform the ancient sepulchre into a dwelling place. The walls are decorated with Arabic and Coptic graffiti.

Also the Tomb of Uau (No. 19) was inhabited by Christians, as is seen by the monogram of Christ on the east wall of the tomb.

Lit.: Davies, N. de G., *The Rock Tombs of Sheikh Said.* Egypt Exploration Fund, London, 1901.

The Ruins of the Basilica of Hermopolis Magna

The ruins of the Basilica of Hermopolis Magna are situated just outside the village of al-Ashmunain, 8 km. northwest of Mallawî. After having reached al-Ashmunain, one

passes through the village and then turns to the right in the direction of Tûnah al-Gabal. At the first road-fork, one turns again to the right and follows the road towards the end.

The ruins of the basilica which consist of columns and capitals, lead one to believe that, at one time, this building served as a Greek Temple which during the Christian Era may have been partially converted into a church.

Ashmunain, an ancient bishopric, is ofen mentioned in the annals of the Egyptian Church. Conon, Bishop of Ashmunain, received a letter from Dionysius (3rd century) to readmit the *lapsi* into his church.

The Ruins of the Basilica of Tûnah al-Gabal

Coming from al-Ashmunain, one by-passes the Basilica of Hermopolis Magna, and follows the road, which leads through the cultivated land to the edge of the desert. The ruins of the Basilica of Tûnah al-Gabal are situated in an extensive cemetery area. Visitors should note the well behind the Basilica. The well, operated with a *saqya*, apparently supplied water for the apsis of the basilica. The only remains of the basilica are the apsis and a few capitals. Scholars have not as yet decided whether the basilica served as a pre-Christian or as a Christian sanctuary.

The Church in the Tomb of Penehse at Tell al-'Amarna

Tell al-'Amarna is the name given to the extensive ruins and rock-tombs which are situated in the vicinity of Hâgg Qandîl on the south and al-Tell on the north. These ancient tombs form the last relics of the royal city of Ikhnaton, the horizon of the sun.

The site of Tell al-'Amarna should be visited from Dair Mawâs. From Dair Mawâs proceed to the village of Bani 'Amrân, where a ferry will take the visitor to al-Tell. At al-Tell one obtains the keys to the northern tombs.

About 2 km. north of al-Tell are the ruins of the City and of the Palace of Amenophis IV, discovered by Flinders Petrie in 1891-1892.

From the site of the Palace, proceed about 4 km. in north-easterly direction, passing the site of the great Temple, to the North Group of the Tombs.

The sixth tomb from the north is the Tomb of Penehse, which, at one time, was used as a church. The tombs consist of a forecourt, the main chamber, and the chamber. The main chamber of the Tomb of Penehse contained originally four papyrus columns with but-capitals, of which two still remain. The false door on the rear wall to the left had been converted into a baptistery at the time when the site was used as a church.

Also the Tomb of Meryra (northern group) was used by Christians, as the Coptic graffiti scratched on the wall indicate.

Lit. : Davies, N. de G., *The Rock Tombs of el-Amarna*, Egypt Exploration Fund. London, 1903.

The Ruins of the Monastery of St. Apollo at Bawît

The ancient site of the famous Monastery of St. Apollo (Dair Anbâ Abûlû) at Bawît is situated about 13 km. west of Dairût or 3 km. south-west of Dashlût. The remains of the monastery are situated about 1 km. in the desert. Today, nothing of archaeological interest can be seen except many mounds which are covered with innumerable potsherds. Those interested to visit the site might be advised to engage a guide from Dairût, as the way to the desert is rather complicated. One can reach the site either from Dairût, Dalga or Sanabû.

At one time, this large monastery included several smaller monasteries with individual chapels. The monastery, which was founded in the 5th or 6th century, was inhabited until the 11th century.

Several objects from the Monastery of St. Apollo are exhibited in the Louvre, Paris, and the Coptic Museum, Old Cairo. One of the most famous polychrome paintings of early Christianity is exhibited in the Coptic Museum. It represents Christ enthroned and supported

by the four Creatures of the Apocalypse and the Holy Virgin flanked by the Apostles and two local Saints.

Lit. : Boreux, Ch., Salle de Baouît; Musée du Louvre, Antiquités Egyptiennes, *Catalogue-Guide* 1, Paris, 1932. 250 ff.

Chassinat, E., *Fouilles à Baouît.* Cairo, 1911.

Clédat, J., *Le Monastère et la Nécropole de Baouît.* Cairo, 1904-1906, 1909, 1916.

Clédat, J., « Recherches sur le Kôm de Baouît, » *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions,* 1902.

Crum, W. E., « Der hl. Apollo und das Kloster von Bawît. » *Zeitschrift fuer Aegyptische Sprache,* XL, 1902.

Graviers des J., « Inventaire des objets coptes de la Salle de Baouît au Louvre, » *Rivista di archeologia cristiana,* 1932. 51 ff.

Krause-Volbach, « Eine Erkundungsfahrt zur Aufnahme Koptischer Denkmaeler in Ober-Aegypten, » *MDAIK,* XVIII.

Maspero, J., *Fouilles exécutées à Baouît.* Cairo, 1931.

The Hermitages at Meir

The village of Meir is situated about 8 km. west of al-Qûsîa. Another 6 km. from Meir towards the edge of the desert is the ancient necropolis of Gosu with the rock-tombs of the noblemen of this particular district. These tombs belong to the Middle Empire. Apart from the ancient Egyptian tombs, there are numerous tombs of the Roman Period. Here many of the mummies were provided with painted plaster portrait busts. Moreover, Greek papyri were discovered in the coffins.

Here as elsewhere, colonies of Christian anchorites established themselves in the tombs. The Christian graffiti in the tombs of Senbi (No. 4) and Oukhotep are evidence that these tombs were occupied by anchorites.

Lit. : Blackman, A. M., *The Rock Tombs of Meir.* Egypt Exploration Fund, London, 1915.

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin at al-Qûsîa

Historically speaking, the Monastery of the Holy Virgin (Dair al-Muharraq) belongs to the group of monasteries which were established by St. Pachomius (Anbâ Bakhûm) or his immediate successors. Its situation as well as the type

of monastic life practised by the monks suggests a Pachomian origin.

The Dair al-Muharraq can be reached from Cairo by train to al-Qûsîa (formerly Nazalî Ganûb), about 65 km. north of Asyût. The monastery is situated about 14 km. west of al-Qûsîa on the edge of the desert.

The history of the foundation of the Monastery of the Holy Virgin is closely interwoven with the story of the Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt. According to tradition the Holy Family travelled via Tell Bastah-Bilbais-Samannûd-al-Matariya and Babylon to a site, on which is situated today the suburb of Ma'âdi. Here, they embarked on a boat and sailed to Upper Egypt until they reached the village of Qusquam (al-Qûsîa). Near Qusquam, Joseph built a small house of bricks, and he covered it with palm leaves, and the Holy Family stayed there for three years and six months and ten days. This is the site of the Dair al-Muharraq.

About the history of the monastery very little is known, and of the 116 patriarchs who have sat on the Throne of St. Mark, only four have come from the Dair al-Muharraq. A 13th century historian writes about the monastery, that pilgrimages have been made by many multitudes from all districts to this church from ancient times, because it has been celebrated on account of signs and wonders and the healing of various diseases, and al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) lists the Dair al-Muharraq as the forty-second monastery in his list of Coptic monasteries, and speaks of the great feast, known as the Palm Feast and Pentecost which attracts a large crowd of people.

The mediaeval travellers Protris and Charles-Francois d'Orléans (1668) and Wansleben (1673) mention the monastery in connection with the tradition of the visit of the Holy Family. The monastery was later visited by Rohlfs (1873), Jullien (1883) and Wilbour (1888).

The most famous monks of the Dair al-Muharraq who have left a lasting impression upon the Coptic Church are Mikhâîl al-Buhairî (d. 1923) and Anbâ Abrâm of the Fayyûm (d. 1914).

The Dair al-Muharraq is the largest and the wealthiest Coptic monastery. About eighty-five monks occupy the monastery.

The Dair al-Muharraq can be conveniently divided into two main sections, the outer and the inner court. A large wall with an irregular outline resembling roughly the shape of a trapezoid encloses the monastery buildings. The dimensions of the monastery are 275 m. by 155 m. In the inner court, we clearly see the ancient and the modern part of the monastery. The ancient structures of the monastery, situated in the western part, have attracted the interest of architects and historians. Here, we find the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the keep and the small tower.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary claims to be the oldest church in the world. According to tradition its history is connected with the Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt and with their visit to al-Qusquam, and Abû Sâlih confirms this tradition, when he states, « that the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the first church which was built in Egypt ».

The altar stone which is dated December 11, 747 A.D., is of interest. This stone, which has the shape of a stele, bears certain inscriptions, which, however, have no connection with the historical development of the monastery or the church.

The church is situated about 1.20 m. below the level of the inner court. It is said that the haikal has been built on the site of the cave which was once inhabited by the Holy Family.

Above the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary there used to be the Church of SS. Peter and Paul. This church, however, was taken down in the latter part of the 19th century, when the new Church of St. George was built. Part of the haikal screen of the old church can still be seen in the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Church of St. Michael is situated on the second story of the keep (qasr). The church is said to have been built by Gabriel VII (1526-1569), Patriarch of Alexandria.

From the terrace roof of the keep one has a fine view of the monastery, the churches of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. George, and the large necropolis, which extends to the west of the monastery. The two small tombs on the roof

were used when the monastery was attacked. An extension of the terrace of about 50 cm. beyond the wall served as latrine in times of attack. A slot in the floor served as a drain. A well, now being closed, provided sufficient water for the besieged. The entrance to the keep is by means of a drawbridge, which connects the first floor of the building with a smaller tower.

The largest church within the inner court of the monastery is the Church of St. George (1888). The building incorporates modern Byzantine features.

The altar and the haikal screen are built of marble. The top of the marble screen is decorated with the icons of the Twelve Apostles. Below these are ten other icons representing the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Pachomius, St. George, St. John Chrysostom, St. Michael, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Gabriel, St. Basil the Great, the Baptism of Jesus, St. Mark the Evangelist. Beneath the marble altar are the tombs of four monks, Qummus Salîb (d. 1905), Qummus Bakhûm I (d. 1928), Qummus Mikhâîl al-Buhairî (d. 1923), Severus, Bishop of Dairût and Sanabo (d. 1927).

South of the sanctuary is the baptistery, where during the annual mûlid in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, up to five hundred children are baptized.

In 1964, the new Church of the Holy Virgin in the outer court of the monastery was dedicated. This church was built especially for the increasing number of pilgrims who attend the annual mûlid. The church has three altars, which are dedicated to St. Takla Haymanot (north), the Holy Virgin (centre) and St. George (south).

The inner walls of the church are richly adorned with paintings representing the Saints of the Church and Biblical scenes.

The outer west wall has two niches. In the northern niche there is a painting showing Mikhâîl al-Buhairî, in the southern niche there is a painting showing Anbâ Abrâm, Bishop of the Fayyûm. Above the entrance to the church there is a painting of the Flight of the Holy Family.

Following the traditional allocation of the themes, the artist has placed the scenes of our Lord's life around the four walls of the church. At the lower level, there are represented the Fathers of the Church and the ge-

neral Hierarchy of Saints, which occupy the wall space nearest to the ground, and consequently are in closer association with everyday life.

Beginning with the haikals, the apse of the northern haikal of St. Takla Haymanot is adorned with a painting of the Resurrection, that of the central haikal shows the Pantocrator, while the apse of the southern haikal of St. George is adorned with a painting of the Ascension of Christ. Above the central haikal screen there are twelve small paintings of the Twelve Apostles and a large painting above the Royal Doors representing the Mystical Supper.

The paintings on the haikal screen represent from north to south the following personages : St. Takla Haymanot, St. Pachomius, St. Mark, the Holy Virgin and Child, the Annunciation, Christ, St. Paul, St. Macarius, and St. George.

The lower south wall from east to west : St. Michael, St. Menas, St. Shenute, St. Antony the Great, St. Paul the Theban.

The lower north wall from west to east : St. Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostomus, St. Cyril the Great, St. Gregorius, St. Athanasius, St. Gabriel.

The upper south wall from east to west : The Nativity of Christ and the Flight of the Holy Family, the Healing of Blind Bartimaeus, the Raising of Jairus' daughter, the Stilling of the Storm. The upper west wall from south to north : The Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, the Samaritan Woman at the Well, the Raising of Lazarus, the Footwashing. The upper north wall from west to east : Dominus Flevit, the Prodigal Son, the Crucifixion, the Sacrifice of Abraham. The upper east wall from north to south : The Imprisonment of Jesus, Gethsemane, the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

The dome is adorned with a painting of Christ, while the four pendentives of the dome show portraits of the Four Evangelists. On the west wall of the church there are two shrines, that of the Holy Virgin (north) and that of St. George (south). The baptistery, south of the main building, has two baptismal fonts and is adorned with a large painting of the Baptism of Christ.

The Dair al-Muharraq is a unique monastic institution. Its location on the edge of the desert has greatly influenced

the neighbouring Coptic society. It is, therefore, not a desert monastery like those of the Wâdî al-Natrûn or the Eastern Desert. In many ways it resembles a large estate administered by the Church. The wealth of the monastery is seen in the splendour of its modern buildings, the most notable being the Pachomian Castle. This building reveals all the elegance of the 19th century Levantine culture.

The Theological Seminary at Dair al-Muharraq was founded by Qummus Bakhûm I in 1905.

> The relatively new Seminary building, which was completed in 1937, is situated in the outer court. The faculty comprises four teachers, and the students number twenty-one monks. The course of study extends over a period of five years and includes the following subjects : Theology, Old and New Testament in Arabic and Coptic, Old and New Testament Exegesis, Dogmatic Theology, Liturgiology, Psalmody, and Coptic, Arabic and English.

The fact that the monastery is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary attracts pilgrims for the various mawâlid in honour of her. During the week of June 21—June 28, about 50,000 pilgrims journey annually to the monastery for the Feast of the Consecration of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Church of St. Theodore at Ezbet Wîssa near Qûsîa

The Church of St. Theodore the Warrior is situated on the western side of the main agricultural road 10 km. south of al-Qûsîa on the way to Manfalût.

This church, which was built in 1860, is typical of so many Coptic churches in the Nile Valley which were constructed by Coptic landowners and notables on their large estates. Most of these churches would date from the latter part of the 19th century or the first quarter of the 20th century for many of the Coptic notables acquired their wealth during the reign of Muhammad 'Alî. Churches of this kind are a tribute to the religious fervour of the Coptic notables.

Thus, as a specimen, the Church of St. Theodore might be of some interest. The church has three haikals which are

dedicated to the Upper Egyptian warrior-saints St. Apater, St. Theodore and St. Victor. The white domes of the church are easily discernible from the road and the church is easily accessible.

The Monastery of St. Mercurius near al-Hawâtka

The ruins of the Monastery of St. Mercurius (Dair Abû Saifain) are situated almost two kilometres south of al-Hawâtka on the southern edge of the village of al-Gâwli. The dair, which is almost hidden by a group of large trees, is surrounded by a Christian necropolis. Noteworthy are the recent tombs (1930) which are locked with iron doors and supplied with large padlocks.

A new construction is built upon the ruins of the ancient dair. There is one altar which is dedicated to St. Mercurius. The baptistery is in the north eastern corner of the church. The remains of the old wooden haikal screens are to be seen in and in front of the church. Fragments of granite columns are used as thresholds. The fragment of the column built into the baptistery is also native.

3. — THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES EAST OF ASYUT

The Monastery of St. Menas

The Monastery of St. Menas (Dair Abû Mînâ) also known as the Dair al-Mu'allaq can be reached most conveniently from the village of al-Ma'âbda. As is the case with the other Christian sites east of Asyût, it is advisable to employ the services of a local guide.

The monastery is situated about half-way up the face of the cliff of Gabal Abû Fudah. The tower-like edifice, which is built of brick and stone, is attached to the face of the rocks. One approaches the mountain dair by ascending a steep path. From a small plateau, one enters the dair by means of a heavy iron chain. There are foot-holes in the wall, and entrance is obtained by clinging to the chain

and inserting the feet in the foot holes. After having reached the first floor, a room something like a kitchen, one proceeds across a bridge to the tower, which has three floors.

On the second floor there is a room which apparently was used for the slaughtering of animals for sacrifices. The Church of St. Mena, which has one altar, is situated on the third floor. The screen is of the usual wooden type adorned with geometrical patterns. From the six windows at the top of the tower one has en extensive view towards the west across the Nile Valley. A large mûlid is held annually in the latter part of July.

About the history of the dair nothing is known, except for the local tradition, which places the building of the dair into the era of St. Helena. Somers Clarke visited the site in 1903, but was under the impression of having seen the Dair al-Gabrâwî.

Lit. : Clarke, S., *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley*. Oxford, 1912.

The Hermitage at the Tomb of Aba (Dair al-Gabrâwî)

The rock tombs of Dair al-Gabrâwî can be reached either from Abnûb or Manfalût. Dair al-Gabrâwî is a small village situated on the eastern bank of the Nile and on the edge of the desert.

The Tomb of Aba belongs to the southern group of rock tombs which are situated on a terrace close under the summit of the mountain range. Here, opposite the village of Dair al-Gabrâwî, the mountains tower steeply above the cultivation and at a comparatively short distance from it.

The Tomb of Aba is carefully hewn both without and within. A passage of about 6 meters in length leads to the burial chamber. On the back wall of the chamber are Coptic graffiti and Coptic crosses in red paint which prove the occupation of the site by a hermit or a colony of monks.

Lit. : Davies, N. de G., *The Rock Tombs of Dair al-Gabrawi*. Egypt Exploration Fund. London, 1902.

The Monastery of St. Victor

The Monastery of St. Victor (Dair Abû Buqtur al-Gabrâwî) is situated on the edge of the desert in the village of Dair al-Gabrâwî. The dair can be reached from Abnûb, travelling for 7 km. in north-westerly direction towards Bani Ibrâhîm.

The new church of St. Victor was built upon the site of an ancient church, of which, however, there are no traces. The church, which is situated near a Christian necropolis, has three haikals which are dedicated to St. Victor, the Archangel (al-Malâk) and the Holy Virgin (?).

The dair is dedicated to St. Victor of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom during the Diocletian persecution.

The Monastery of St. Victor at Shû

The Monastery of St. Victor at Shû, known as the Church of Buqtur Shû can be easily approached by car from Abnûb, provided one has secured the services of a guide.

Buqtur Shû, approximately 5 km. from Abnûb, is a small village within the agricultural area between Abnûb and Dair al-Gabrâwî. Since the land and the roads are often under water, it is advisable to inquire about conditions beforehand.

The church is situated on the eastern edge of the village. The new church was built upon the site of an older church, and the ancient well in the inner court is the only part of the older structure. The new church has one haikal dedicated to St. Victor of Shû. The icons, representing the Mystical Supper, the Holy Virgin and St. Victor, are of popular art. Noteworthy is the southern part of the haikal screen, which bears the date of 1157 A.M. or 1441 A.D.

At one time a large and important town, Buqtur Shû is today a small and insignificant village. St. Victor of Shû, commemorated in the *Coptic Synaxarium* on Kihak 5, served as a soldier in the fortress of Shû. He refused to obey Diocletian's edict ordering all soldiers to join in sacrifices. Several times he was persuaded to

conform, but instead he witnessed courageously for his Christian faith in Asyût and elsewhere. Eventually he suffered martyrdom by being cast into the furnace which was used for heating the baths.

The Confession of Faith, in which Patriarch Gabriel VIII (1585-1602) recognized the supremacy of the Roman Papacy, was written in the Monastery of St. Victor at Abnûb in January 1590. This confession was addressed to Pope Sixtus V (1585-1590) and contained the willingness of the Coptic Patriarch to unite with the See of Rome. The document was submitted in Rome by Ghobrîâl al-Muharraqî, Archdeacon Barsûma of the Church of St. Mark in Alexandria and Ghobrîâl, a monk of the Monastery of the Holy Virgin at Gabal al-Tair.

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin in Bani Rizâh

In order to reach the Monastery of the Holy Virgin (Dair al-'Adhrâ) in Bani Rizâh, it is imperative to employ the services of a reliable guide in Abnûb. From Abnûb, proceed via Sharia 'Uthmân Ghazâlî through several very narrow streets until reaching Sharia Hashem Khalîl. The village of Bani Rizâh adjoins Abnûb, and it is difficult to determine where the town ends and the village begins.

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin was rebuilt in 1955 by Abûnâ Mûsâ Sama'ân. Except for the well in the inner court, there are no remains visible, which belonged to the older church. The new brick church, which has three haikals, can be entered through two doors. The haikals are dedicated to the Archangel Michael, the Holy Virgin and St. George. An old icon of the Crucifixion is attached above the left door. According to tradition, the old church was built in the times of the Romans.

It is advisable to obtain the key for the church from the priest of the Church of St. Abifam in Abnûb.

Once a year, during the Feast of the Holy Virgin (August 15-August 22), a large mûlid is held at the Dair al-'Adhrâ.

The Church of Abifam (Phœbammon) in Abnûb

The Church of Abifam is the largest of the Coptic churches in Abnûb. Built upon the site of an ancient church, the new church was erected in 1880. The church has three haikals which are dedicated to the Archangel Michael (north), Abifam (centre) and St. George (south). The baptistery is situated on the south-east corner of the church and the gynaikion occupies the westernmost part of the church. Noteworthy is an 18th century icon of Abifam.

Other Coptic churches in Abnûb are dedicated to St John and to St. George.

The Monastery of St. Isaac

The Monastery of St. Isaac (Dair Abû Ishâq) south of 'Arab al-'Awâmir can be best reached by car from Abnûb. It is advisable to employ the services of a local guide. The monastery, which is situated on the edge of the desert, is located between 'Arab Miteir and 'Arab al-'Awâmir. The monastery is built of mud-bricks and is crowned by a large dome and several small ones. Some trees offer shade to the church and its surrounding mud-bricks buildings.

Adjoining the monastery in the desert is a Christian necropolis. Several tombs are decorated with brightly coloured Christian symbols and Arabic writings.

The interior of the church is very plain and there are new pews. The church has three haikals which are dedicated to the Holy Virgin (north), St. Isaac (centre), and St. Mercurius (south). The plain wooden haikal screen has the following icons : The Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Holy Family, the Holy Virgin with Child, and St. George. All icons are reproductions of popular Western religious art. Noteworthy is the icon of St. Isaac in the centre haikal which may be assigned to the 18th or 19th century.

At the north wall of the nave is the tomb of Girgis Mikhâîl, who built the present church. The present edifice was

built upon the site of an ancient church, which, according to tradition, was built during the period of the Roman occupation of Egypt. The key is with the people who live at the church.

On the south wall of the nave are numerous crosses and imprints of hands. These are made by pilgrims who dip their hands into mud and then press their hands against the walls. A mûlid is held at the monastery during the month of May.

4. — THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES BETWEEN ASYUT AND SOHAG

The Christian Churches of Asyût

Asyût or Siût, the name which is still preserved in the Coptic Syout, has always enjoyed considerable importance even in antiquity, because of its favourable location in the midst of an extensive and fertile plain.

> The Greeks called the town Lycopolis or wolf-city, because the jackal-headed Anubis was worshipped there. The Arab geographers describe Asyût as a town of considerable size and importance, and prior to the abandonment of the Sudan near the end of the 19th century all caravans from that region stopped there. From time immemorial, the slave caravans from Darfûr and Kordofan, following the Darb al-Arba'în, terminated in Asyût.

Asyût has always been a centre of Christian activity. One of the most famous Christian teachers of Asyût was St. John of Lycopolis, whose life is described by Palladius. In the past, Asyût was commonly referred to as the city of churches, and many missions, both Catholic and Protestant, established themselves in Asyût.

Of the numerous Coptic Orthodox Churches in Asyût, the Church of St. Apater is the most significant one. The church is situated in the old district of the city. One enters

the church, which was built towards the end of the 18th century, through a large courtyard.

The Church of St. Apater has three sanctuaries on the ground floor, which are dedicated to St. Michael (north), St. Apater (centre) and SS. Peter and Paul (north). On the first floor, above the Church of St. Apater is the Church of St. Theodore the Warrior.

A third church is situated north of the Church of St. Apater. This church, which is considerably smaller than the latter, is dedicated to the Holy Virgin. North of the sanctuary is the baptistery.

St. Apater or Shahîd Abadîr, the son of Basilides and Eirene, was deputy governor of Alexandria. During the Diocletian persecution he sought the crown of martyrdom, but wishing to spare his mother's feelings, he went to Upper Egypt. Arianus, the governor, believing him to be a native of Ashmunain, addressed him in Coptic, but St. Apater replied in Greek, and thus was betrayed. After suffering many tortures, he was beheaded.

In addition to the Church of St. Apater, the Coptic Orthodox Church has the Church of St. Mark with the side chapel of St. Antony (1904), the Church of the Holy Martyrs (1946), the Church of St. George (1947) and the Church of St. Michael with wall paintings by Isaac Fanûs. The Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to St. Spyridon. The Coptic Catholic Cathedral of Asyût is one of the finest church buildings in Upper Egypt, moreover, there is also a Franciscan Church. The Coptic Evangelical Church has three churches in Asyût. In addition, there are several churches of smaller Evangelical denominations in Egypt, *e.g.* the Standard Church Mission at Sharia al-Nemies and others.

The Dair al-Mouttin on Stable 'Antar

The Dair al-Mouttin is situated on the mountain about 1½ km. west of Asyût, known as Stable 'Antar or the stable of 'Antar. Here we discover numerous ancient tombs, which date as far back as the 8th Dynasty.

Soon after St. Antony began to teach the ascetic life, Christian hermits began to inhabit the large rock-

hewn tombs in the hills west of Asyût (Lycopolis). The monks destroyed the statues in the tombs and defaced the pictures of the gods on the walls. One of the most famous Christian teachers of this place was St. John of Lycopolis (d. 394 A.D.), who attained great celebrity as a prophet and was occasionally consulted by the Emperor Theodosius. He is said to have declared that the Emperor was to conquer Maximus the rebel, and to defeat Eugenius, both of which events took place. In the 14th century, the Monastery of the Seven Mountains was situated on the summit of Stable 'Antar. This monastery, however, which was famous for its several mawâlid, was destroyed in the 15th century.

The Dair al-Mouttin consists of two chapels, which were built into the tombs of the Pharaonic necropolis. The tombs are situated to the north of the necropolis between the Tomb of Emsa and that of Shaikh Abû Tûq. The tombs are closed with an iron fence. The keys can be obtained from the guard of the Department of Antiquities at the mountain.

The first chapel, which is very close to the Tomb of Emsa, about halfway to the summit, is divided into two rooms. The first room is adorned with a wall painting representing a young man carrying the Gospel, whereas the walls of the second room show several 6th or 7th century wall paintings and graffiti, which may have been scratched on the walls by hermits or pilgrims.

The second chapel, situated in the vicinity of the first chapel, has two rooms of which the first one is damaged. The second room, on the other hand, is beautifully decorated with several wall paintings ; the most interesting one represents an angel carrying a medallion of Christ. In His left hand, Christ holds a book upon which is written « the Light ».

Lit. : Johann Georg, *Streifzuege durch die Kirchen und Kloester Aegyptens.* Leipzig, 1914.

Lefebvre, M. G., « Egypte Chrétienne, » *Annales du Service,* X, 1, 50.

Palanque, M. Ch., « Notes de Fouilles dans la Nécropole d'Assiout, » *Bull. Inst. Franç. Arch. Orient,* III.

The Ruins of the Monastery of al-'Izam

The ruins of the Monastery of al-'Izam are situated about 3 km. south-west of Asyût, beyond Stable 'Antar.

Around the ruins of of the monastery, the valley is covered with graves which have been systematically dug over and rifled.

Within this large cemetery are the ruins of the monastery which was enclosed by a surrounding wall. The remains of the church are partly buried in its own debris. Graves are found inside and immediately outside the church and throughout the enclosure. The church seems to have been of the basilican type. The ruins of the qasr are situated to the north of the church.

The Church of the Angel at Durunka

The village of Durunka is situated about 4 km. south of Asyût, at the foot of the long line of frowning cliffs. The Church of the Angel (al-Malâk) and the village lie on the slope at the foot of the cliff.

> According to tradition, a church has stood there for many centuries. When it became ruinous, it was rebuilt on the same plan as the old church sometime in the latter part of the 19th century.

The Church of the Angel, which is entered through a door in the northern wall has four divisions from west to east, the most western part being used as the gynaikion. The church has two haikals, the northern haikal is dedicated to St. Bishoi, the central haikal to the Angel. South of the central haikal is the sacristy. The baptistery is situated in the southern part of the gynaikion.

The six eastern bays of the church are covered with brick domes, whereas the western part of the church is roofed with beams on which are laid reeds covered with a flat roof of mud bricks.

Lit. : Clarke, S., *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley*. Oxford. 1912.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary
at Dair Durunka

The village of Dair Durunka is situated about ten kilometres south of Asyût at the foot of the mountain range which extends west of Asyût. Coming from Asyût, one follows the desert road along the foot of the mountain, passing through the villages of Durunka and Dair Durunka. The ascent to the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, built in 1955, has been greatly improved by the new road constructed by Anbâ Mikhâîl, Bishop of Asyût.

The new Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is situated on a shelf of the cliff, facing to the west the large caves which at one time were inhabited by hermits, later by Christians escaping from persecutions. The ruins of the cave village and the ancient Cave Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary are still visible.

During the annual mûlid (August 7-22) in commemoration of the Visit of the Holy Family to Asyût on their Flight to Egypt, thousands of pilgrims inhabit the caves. According to a local oral tradition, the Holy Family rested in one of the caves. On the slope, many new buildings are established for the accommodation of pilgrims. Moreover, a loudspeaker system has been installed. There is good reason to believe that in time to come, the mûlid at Dair Durunka might become the largest mûlid in Upper Egypt.

The episcopal residence of Bishop Michael is situated north of the church. From the roof of the residence one has a wonderful view over the Nile Valley.

The Coptic Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is situated in the village of Dair Durunka. The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is one of the best known Catholic churches in the Asyût region on account of the Catholic mûlid which is held there at the same time as that of the Orthodox.

The fact that the above mentioned site has had a long Christian tradition cannot be denied, since al-Maq-

rîzî lists numerous monasteries and churches which were situated here.

About 2 km. south of Dair Durunka, and 800 metres west of the cultivated land, are the remains of numerous Pharaonic tombs which were converted into Christian hermitages. It is here, where we should locate the Monastery of St. Severus (Dair Anbâ Sawîrûs).

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Theodore

The village of Dair Rîfa is situated on the slope of the mountain range, which extends from Asyût southwards. Coming from Asyût and travelling along the edge of the desert, one passes first Dair Durunka. After another 5 km. (desert road), one approaches Dair Rîfa. The ascent to Dair Rîfa is by a steep climb, following some well-worn steps cut into the hard limestone rock. Dair Rîfa is not a monastery in the ordinary sense of the term. It is a village, the houses of which are built on a little shelf of the cliff or in ancient tombs, some of which are enclosed by walls. In the beginning of the 20th century, the inhabitants of Dair Rîfa deserted their dwellings and settled on the cultivated land.

One enters the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary through a massive doorway. The Church, which is built into the rock, is divided into four sections, the gynaikion being the most western part. The church is lighted by a hole in the roof just in front of the haikal. The altar is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The church is adorned with several good icons, the most ancient one depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary. Within the great tomb is the Church of St. Theodore, a small mud-brick structure roofed with a little dome. The church has one haikal which is dedicated to St. Theodore.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Church of St. Theodore are mentioned by Abû Sâlih (13th century). The Convent of Hanadah, which was inhabited by nuns, is no longer there. Al-Maqrîzî (15th century) omits any reference to the Church of St. Theodore at Rîfa, instead he mentions the Church of St. Colluthus, the physician and monk, in whose honour a festival was held.

The new Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Theodore, built in 1950 by Habîb Rizk of Asyût, is situated in the cultivated land. The church has three haikals and is adorned with modern religious paintings. Special celebrations are held annually in the new church as well as in the ancient churches on the Feast of St. Theodore, April 15.

Lit. : Johann Georg, *Neueste Streifzuege durch die Kirchen und Kloester Aegyptens.* Berlin, 1931.

The Dair al-Balâyza

To visit the ruins of the ancient Monastery of al-Balâyza, one should follow the road along the edge of the desert southwards from Dair Rîfa. After about 2 km. one will pass al-Zâwya.

At al-Zâwya, situated on the edge of the desert, is a large four-square fortified Coptic village, enclosed by a wall, the brickwork of which is ornamented around the upper part. At one time a monastery, this site is occupied by Coptic families. The ground to the west is deeply covered with late Roman potsherds.

About 4 km. south of al-Zâwya, the mountain range is interrupted by a small wâdî. The northern range is marked by numerous caves and mud-brick ruins which are the remains of an ancient monastic settlement, the Dair al-Balâyza. That this settlement was of considerable importance is seen by the wide extent of territory covered by the ruins. The ruins may date from the 7th to the 10th century.

Dair al-Balâyza is the site of the discovery of famous liturgical papyri. It was excavated by Rhoades, Mackay and Gregg.

Lit. : Roberts and Capelle, *An Early Euchologium. The Der Balizeh Papyrus.* Louvain, 1949.

Scherman, « Der liturgische Papyrus von der Balyzah, » *Texte und Untersuchungen,* XXXVI, 1, Leipzig, 1910.

Petrie, F., *Gizeh and Rifeh.* Brit. School of Archaeology, 1907.

The Village of al-Zâwya

During the Middle Ages and until the 19th century, the Coptic village of al-Zâwya, known also as Zawyet al-Dair, 15 km. south of Asyût on the edge of the Western Desert, was the site where thousands of African slaves were castrated in order to be transported from Asyût to Cairo, and from there to the harems of the Ottoman Empire. The Coptic Church in al-Zâwya is dedicated to Abi Tarbu, perhaps St. Therapon, the patron of healing.

Lit. : Meinardus, O., « The Upper Egyptian Practice of the Making of Eunuchs in the 18th and 19th century », *Zeitschrift fuer Ethnologie*, vol. 94, 1, 1969, pp. 47-58.

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin at Dair al-Ganâdla

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin is situated about 2 km. west of Dair al-Ganâdla, almost in direct line west of the town of Sidfa (36 km. south of Asyût). From Sidfa one follows the road to al-Diwair and from there through the cultivated land to the edge of the desert. At the foot of the mountain, the monastery is situated in the cliffs.

> S. Clarke gives the following description as to the location of the monastery : « Quite at the foot of these cliffs, and immediately in front of us, is a patch, a surface darker in colour than that of the surrounding limestone cliffs. To the north of the patch are black marks indicating holes in the rock. The opening of a barren jagged valley divides the cliffs immediately to the south. Riding straight forward, the dark patch gradually resolves itself into the walls of the dair ».

The monastery is enclosed by a wall on the north, east and south sides, while the west is formed by a frowning cliff. The monastery is entered through a doorway in the north wall of the enclosure, in the north-western part of which the new church is found.

The Church of the Apostles or the new church, built in 1865, is not attached to any of the walls, and stands a little south of the north wall thus leaving a space for a door to an ancient tomb. This passage now leads to the gynaikion.

The church whose three domes are seen from a distance, has three haikals which are dedicated to St. Macrobius (north), SS. Peter and Paul (centre) and St. George (south).

The Church of the Holy Virgin, the cave church or the ancient church, is situated west of the new church. This church is built in the mouth of an ancient quarry which extends into the cliff. The church is entered through a dark little passage, one side of which is formed by the rock. Though the church has three sanctuaries, only the central sanctuary, dedicated to the Holy Virgin, has an altar. The partition on the west side of the church is of brick. At the most western end of the cave are numerous wall paintings. According to a local tradition, this church marks the site of a famous anchorite's dwelling place.

Another local tradition associates the cave with the visit of the Holy Family to Egypt. It is in this cave, that the Holy Family is said to have rested.

Lit. : Clarke, S., *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley*. Oxford, 1912.

Johann Georg, *Neueste Streifzuege durch die Kirchen und Kloester Aegyptens*. Berlin, 1931.

The Ruins of the Monastery of St. Thomas

About 1 km. south of the Monastery of the Holy Virgin at Dair al-Ganâdla are situated the ruins of the Monastery of St. Thomas as well as numerous hermitages. The ruins of the Monastery and the hermitages are found at the mouth of the Wâdî Sarga.

The Wâdî Sarga is a broad valley, about 200 metres wide, and about one and a half kilometres distant from the edge of the cultivated land. Apparently, the ancient inhabitants had masked the entrance to the wâdî with a vallum now only a few feet high and jutting out in the form of a rectangle towards the eastern flats and made partly of large rough stones.

The following account of the site is a description by S. Clarke :

« The face of the cliffs rising at least 200 metres and forming part of the chain of rocky hills is here broken by an opening, the mouth of a narrow gorge, the Wâdî Sarga, which runs northward, almost parallel with the face of the cliffs, and suddenly turning at right angles towards the east and opens to the Nile valley. Entering the valley, we see the long low openings of quarries, subdivided by pillars of rock. Entering these, each chamber opening into the other, we find the walls recessed into many little niches, with remains of brick walls. At the east end of the quarry many paintings are seen on the wall ; in fact, we have before us the east wall and the apse of a church. The side walls of the church were evidently of brick, now gone ; only where the rock was used for a wall does the painting remain. In the conch of the apse is depicted the Last Supper. The figures are painted chiefly in outline with red and a little yellow and green pigment here and there. A second church can be traced west of the first. The conch of the apse, cut in the rock, still remains, with a niche on the south side. There are a few Coptic inscriptions, some well preserved, painted in red on the white walls, some also in Arabic... ».

The MSS which were discovered at Wâdî Sarga refer to the Holy Monastery of Apa Thomas, who presumably was the founder of the monastic community and may have lived in the 6th century. There is good reason to believe that the monastery was still inhabited in the 8th century, but was later abandoned during one of the subsequent persecutions.

Lit. : *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley.* Oxford, 1912.

Crum, W. E. and Bell, H. I., *Wadi Sarga,* Hauniae, 1922.

Dalton, O. M., « A Coptic Wall Painting from Wadi Sarga, » *Journal of Egypt. Archaeology,* III, 35 ff.

Thompson, R., « Excavations at Wadi Sarga, » *Journal of Egypt. Archaeology,* I, 187 f.

Wessel, Klaus, *Koptische Kunst. Die Spaetantike in Aegypten.* Recklinghausen, 1963.

The Church of St. Mercurius at Shutb

The village of Shutb, in the Middle Ages the site of the Monastery of Abû al-Sarî where the relics of St. Theodore reposed, is situated 8 km. south of Asyût on the road to Abû

Tîg. According to the Synaxarium, St. Theodore was a native of Shutb. In the 11th century, Abraham, Bishop of Shutb attended the episcopal synod in Cairo, and in 1320 and in 1330, Athanasius, Bishop of Shutb, is mentioned among those who attended the Services of the Concoction of the Holy Chrism. The memory of St. Theodore of Shutb has been forgotten, although the villagers maintain that, once upon a time, twenty-four churches were situated in Shutb. The new Church of St. Mercurius (1940) was built upon the site of a former church.

The Church of St. Claudius in Bâqûr

The Church of St. Claudius in Bâqûr in the diocese of Abû Tîg is situated 12 km. south of Asyût. The 19th century church was built upon the site of the old Church of St. Claudius, which is mentioned in the Synaxarium. The ancient well of the former church is in the new school north of the church, whereas the ancient burial ground is situated south of the church.

The new Church of St. Claudius in Baqûr has three haikals, which are dedicated to the Virgin Mary (north), St. Claudius (centre) and St. George (south). The priests of the church are buried close to the northern wall within the nave. The oldest icon, that of St. Claudius, dates from 1573 A.M. or 1857 A.D.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES BETWEEN SOHAG AND ASWAN

1. — THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES WEST OF SOHAG

The Churches of Sohâg

Sohâg, a very handsome and clean Upper Egyptian town, is the episcopal see of the Coptic Orthodox bishop of Sohâg. The diocese comprises all churches in the District of Sohâg.

There are two Coptic Orthodox Churches in Sohag, the Church of the Holy Virgin, and the Church of St. George. There is also a Coptic Catholic Church and a Coptic Evangelical Church.

The Monastery of St. Shenute

An embanked road leads west from the southern part of Sohâg via the village of Mazâlwah to the early Christian settlement of the White Monastery (Dair al-Abiad), which is dedicated to St. Shenute. The distance from Sohâg to the White Monastery, which is situated on the edge of the desert, is about four and a half kilometres. The monastery is surrounded on its north, west and south sides by a large amount of debris, both of burnt and crude brick. The monastery included not only the present stone structures, but also

cells, kitchens and storehouses, the ruins of which can still be seen.

The original settlement, situated west of Sohâg, was founded by St. Bigoul. After his father's death, St. Shenute became a monk in the monastery of St. Bigoul who happened to be his maternal uncle. Before long, St. Shenute's administrative gifts led him to important offices in the monastic community and in the church. At his uncle's death (385 A.D.) St. Shenute became the hegoumenos of the monastery. In the monastery, the rule was based upon the precepts of St. Bigoul, which were similar to those of St. Pachomius. In 431 A.D., St. Shenute attended the Oecumenical Council of Ephesus where he opposed strongly Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople. The date of his death seems to have been about 449 A.D. He was a religious reformer who was ready to employ physical force in dealing with disobedient monks.

Following the death of St. Shenute, the community continued under the leadership of Besa who was succeeded by Zenobius. — In the middle of the eighth century, al-Kâsim ibn 'Ubaid 'Allah, the governor, entered the monastery together with the odalisque who was with him and forced his way into the church. Thereupon, the horse which the woman was riding fell to the ground, and both the woman and the horse died. — Some inscriptions on the wall paintings of the central apse of the sanctuary furnish us with some historical information of the period from 1076-1124. Those who engraved their names were Armenians who had established themselves in the White Monastery. Thus Bahram, the Armenian Chirstian who had been vizier in the caliphate of al-Hâfiz became a monk in this monastery after he was banished from his office.

In the 12th century, the monastery must have enjoyed a period of prosperity which in 1168 was interrupted by an assault of the soldiers of Shîrkûh. Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) records that within the monastery are the bodies of the two disciples, Bartholomew and Simon the Canaanite. Moreover, he states that in this monastery there is a keep, and there is around the keep and the monastery also a wall of enclosure, within which there is a garden full of all sorts of trees. Major restorations of the monastery took place between 1202 and 1259. In the latter part of the 18th century, the south-west corner of the enclosing wall had collapsed, but was rebuilt

under the direction of Muhammad Alî. In 1907, the monastery was repaired again, the incrustations of brick work were removed and the doorways were uncovered.

The monastery was visited by Wansleben (1672), Pococke (1737), who followed Wansleben in ascribing the foundation of the monastery to St. Helena. Denon (1798) saw the monastery the day following its destruction by the Mamluks. Robert Curzon (1833) visited the monastery and Butler (1884) restated the observations of other travellers. Fergusson (1893) published a plan of the monastery, yet the most significant studies were done by W. de Bock (1901), C. R. Peers (1904), W. M. F. Petrie (1907), S. Clarke (1912), and Monneret de Villard (1925).

Every visitor or tourist who is interested in Christian antiquities should not fail to visit this monastery, which in the words of Somers Clarke is « the noblest church of which we have any remains in Egypt, the chief monument of the Christians... ». According to Petrie, the existing church is the second one built in this locality. It is quite obvious that the monks could not possibly have lived within the four walls of the present building, which consists merely of the church, the narthex at its western end and a very long hall, situated on the southern side of the church, and several apartments for two Coptic priests and several Coptic families who inhabit the monastery.

The appearance of the monastery from the outside shows a striking resemblance to that of an ancient Egyptian temple. The monastery is entered through a gate in the southern wall which leads to the great hall parallel to the nave of the Church of St. Shenute.

The Church of St. Shenute occupies the major part of the monastery. The church has three apses at the east end, which are vaulted with burnt-brick. The walls of the apses are decorated with columns in two ranges, each surmounted by architraves, and between the columns are niches. The semi-domes are decorated with wall paintings representing the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary (north), the Pantocrator and the four Evangelists (centre) and the Resurrection with the two women and two angels (south). The

church has three sanctuaries which are dedicated to St. George (north), St. Shenute (centre) and the Blessed Virgin Mary (south). The wooden sanctuary screen is relatively modern. There are no altars in the northern and southern apses.

The narthex, situated at the western end of the nave has a semicircular apse, and the columns, the architrave and the vault of the apse are all at the north end. The side walls of the narthex are decorated with niches.

South of the narthex is a large staircase, the lower part of which is terribly damaged and even the upper part is in a sad condition. By climbing the stairs (utmost care has to be exercised) one will eventually reach the top of the wall which is crowned with a cornice. From here one has a beautiful view on the Nile Valley and the mountains. The walls of the monastery show traces of painting on a thin coat of plaster with which the whole monastery seems to have been covered. Two ranges of recesses, like windows, are seen in the outer walls.

South of the staircase is a room with a dome built entirely of burnt brick which was rebuilt in the 19th century. Here the well is situated.

The Monastery of St. Bishoi

The Red Monastery (Dair al-Ahmar) or the Monastery of St. Bishoi (Dair Anbâ Bishoî) is situated about 3 km. north of the White Monastery at the extreme western edge of the cultivated land. It can be easily approached by car. Unlike the White Monastery, the Red Monastery is situated within a village, and some houses lie to the south and to the east. The area to the north and to the west of the monastery is mainly covered with debris.

The monastery received its name from the burnt red bricks of its outside wall which are considerably thicker at the base than at the top.

The historical data of this monastery are very scarce, and it seems that the Red Monastery existed

throughout the centuries in the shadow of the White Monastery. An inscription in the monastery refers to a certain monk Mercurius who entered the monastery in 1301. Al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) mentions the monastery without giving any information about its history. Wansleben (1672) and Pococke (1737) visited the monastery. We know from Denon (1798) that at the time of his visit the monastery was sacked by the Mamluks.

One enters the monastery through a gate in the south wall and then passes through a passage between houses to the main court which may have been the nave of the Church of St. Bishoi. The church is situated in the north-eastern corner of the monastery. The original plan of this church is almost the same as that of the Church of St. Shenute. The semi-domes are adorned with beautiful wall paintings. The walls of the apses are decorated with columns in two ranges, each surmounted by architraves, and between the columns are niches.

The Church of St. Bishoi has one haikal. Icons of SS. Shenute, Bishoi and Bigoul are attached to the haikal screen. The north and south apses are without altars.

The area of the original nave and aisles of the church are largely occupied with buildings. The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is situated in the south-western corner of the monastery. This church seems to be of great antiquity. Immediately west of the church is the well.

The Red Monastery, except that it is much smaller, was built on the same plan as that of St. Shenute.

Lit. : Curzon, R., *Visits to the Monasteries in the Levant*. London, 1847.

Deichmann, F. W. "Zum Altaegyptischen in der Koptischen Baukunst,» *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Instituts fuer Aegyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo*, VIII, 1939, 34-37.

Denon, V., *Voyages dans la Basse et la Haute-Egypte, pendant les Campagnes du Général Bonaparte*. Paris, 1802.

Fergusson, *A History of the Architecture*. London, 1893.

Harvey, Lethaby, Dalton, *The Church of the Nativity*. London, 1910.

Lefebure, G., «Dayr el-Abiad» in Cabrol, *Dictionnaire*, fig. 3646.

Lefebure, G., Cf. *Annales du Service des Antiquités*, XX, 192[illegible], 250.

Leipoldt, J., *Shenute von Atripe und die Entstehung des national aegyptischen Christentums*. Leipzig, 1903.

Meinardus, O., « Some lesser known Wall-Paintings in the Red Monastery at Sohag, » *Bull. Soc. d'Arch. Copte*, XX.

Monneret de Villard, U., *Les couvents près de Sohag*. Milan 1925.

Peers, C. R., « The White Monastery near Sohag, » *Archaeological Journal*, 1904, 131-153.

Pococke, R., *A Description of the East*. Vol. I. London, 1743.

The Hermitage of Atribis

The hermitage of Atribis is situated about 3 km. south of the White Monastery (Dair al-Abiad) which is dedicated to St. Shenute. A cave, not very large, and cut in the side of the Mountain of Atribis, served as a chapel or a hermitage.

At the entrance of the cave, on the right, there is a Coptic inscription of a badly mutilated prayer ; on the left, there is a representation of a pigeon with wings stretched out and a cross on its head. On the north wall of the cave is a hunting scene. Furthermore, there are several crosses and birds (pigeons ?). One cross is decorated with the letters « alpha » and « omega ».

The site can be easily reached from Sohâg or the White Monastery.

Lit. : De Bock, W., *Matériaux pour servir à l'Archéologie de l'Eglise Chrétienne*. St. Petersbourg, 1901.

2.—THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES EAST OF AKHMIM

The Monastery of St. Pachomius

The Monastery of St. Pachomius (Dair Anbâ Bakhûm) is situated in the village of Sawâm'a Sharq, about 8 km.

north of Akhmîm. To reach the monastery, it is advisable to proceed from Akhmîm for 2 1/2 km. in north-easterly direction. Having reached the road-fork, follow the Saiylet (Canal) Akhmîm al-Sharqiya for another 3 km. in north-westerly direction to Ubbâr al-Waqf. Turn right on the road to Sawâm'a Sharq. The village of Sawâm'a Sharq is situated on the edge of the desert and the Monastery of St. Pachomius lies in the northern part of the village.

The Church of St. Pachomius is the only construction which has survived the destruction of the monastery. The church, which has five haikals, is situated within a courtyard. The western part of the church is an addition of a more recent date. Above the entrance to the church are numerous Ptolemaic inscriptions. The present edifice was built upon the site of an older church.

The Monastery of St. Michael

The Monastery of the Archangel Michael (Dair al-Malâk) is situated on the edge of the desert near the village of al-Salâmûnî, about 2 km. north of al-Hawâwîsh. The monastery is easily accessible from Akhmîm. Follow the bus from the station of the Akhmîm markaz to al-Hawâwîsh and from there turn on to the road which leads to al-Galaweyah. At al-Salâmûnî turn in easterly direction towards the monastery in the desert.

The key for the monastery can be obtained from the priest in Sohâg or the bishop in Akhmîm. The monastery is still used at certain occasions, especially on the Feasts of the Archangel Michael on November 21st and June 19th.

The Church of St. Michael has three haikals, which are dedicated to the Holy Virgin (south), St. Michael (centre) and St. George (north). According to tradition, the monastery was built in the 13th century.

> The monastery is mentioned by al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) who states: « The Church of Michael, also at Ikhmîm. There is a custom among the Christians at these two churches, that when they are keeping the Feast of

Palms, also called the Feast of Hosanna, the priests and deacons go in procession with censers, incense, crosses, the gospels, and lighted candles, and stand before the door of the Qadi, and then before the doors of the most respectable Muslims, where they burn incense, read a passage of the Gospel, and sing a hymn, that is to say, praise him.»

Lit. : Al-Makrîzî, *Khitat, Ed.* B. T. A. Evetts, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt.* Oxford, 1895.

The Monastery of the Martyrs

The Monastery of the Martyrs (Dair al-Shuhadâ) is situated within a cemetery on a slight elevation. The monastery can be conveniently approached by car, taxi or buses from the station at the Akhmîm markaz. From Akhmîm proceed in easterly direction for about 6 km. to the Social Centre of al-Hawâwîsh. From al-Hawâwîsh the Monastery of the Martyrs can be reached by walking through the cultivated land and the desert for about 1 km. in slightly northerly direction. (The people working at the Social Centre will gladly furnish a guide if necessary).

The monastery can be visited without a key, since the key seems to be lost, though a large stone is rolled against the entrance door from within. The Church of the Martyrs has altogether seven haikals, though the original church had only three haikals. Three haikals were added on the south side, one haikal was added on the north side of the church. The three central haikals are dedicated to the Holy Virgin (south), the Holy Martyrs (centre) and St. Michael (north). From the roof of the church one has a beautiful view over the Nile Valley. The cells and the storage rooms are situated north of the church.

Special services are conducted by the priests of Akhmîm on January, 10, and July 9.

Al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) refers to the monastery and states : «Church of Asutir, which means the Saviour; this stands in the city of Ikhmim, and is much revered among the Christians; it bears the name of the Martyrs, and there is a well there, the water of which, if it be put into a lamp, becomes of a deep red colour like blood.

From this monastery comes the now famous *Book of Proverbs,* which is one of the earliest complete papyrus manuscripts in existence. It contains a translation of the Proverbs of Solomon into the Akhmîm dialect. The book was probably written in the 4th century. It has one of the longest texts in this dialect ever preserved.

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin

The Monastery of the Holy Virgin (Dair al-'Adhrâ) east of Akhmîm can be conveniently reached by following the road parallel the Saiyalet (Canal) Sahil al-Hawâwîsh towards al-Hawâwîsh (6 km.). From the Social Centre of al-Hawâwîsh, which is situated at the very end of the road, the monastery can be reached within ten minutes of walking. The monastery is situated on the edge of the desert, though in the desert. Buses and taxis commute between the Akhmîm markaz and the Social Centre of al-Hawâwîsh. The keys for the monastery are with the priest in Akhmîm.

The Church of the Holy Virgin is situated in the eastern part of the monastery. The original church had three haikals, which are dedicated to St. George (south), the Holy Virgin (centre) and al-Malâk (St. Michael) (north). North of the main church we find two additional haikals which are of more recent origin. These two haikals are dedicated to St. Paul the Hermit and to St. Antony. The western part of the church is not covered with the traditional domes, but with vaults. The church is noteworthy because of its beautiful interior decoration consisting of coloured bricks. The date of the church is difficult to determine, though it may belong to the 17th or 18th century.

The cells and storage rooms are situated to the south and to the north of the church. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated in the Church on the following days :

December 12, the Feast of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin.

January 29, the Feast of the Falling Asleep of the Holy Virgin.

June 28, the Commemoration of the first church dedicated to the Holy Virgin at Philippi.

August 22, the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin.

The Monastery of the Seven Mountains

The Monastery of the Seven Mountains can be reached from Akhmîm by proceeding first to the village of al-Hawâwîsh. From there continue in north-westerly direction to the village of al-Salâmûnî, which is situated at the edge of the desert. At al-Salâmûnî enter the Wâdî Bir al-'Ain and follow the wâdî for nine kilometres in north-easterly direction. The ruins are situated near the Bir al-'Ain.

Before arriving at this site, one notices on the right a large rock which apparently has fallen from the mountain. One side of this rock is covered with inscriptions and designs and graffiti. Most of these graffiti are in Greek ; moreover, there are crosses as well as monograms of Christ.

The monastery was a laura rather than a fortified and enclosed settlement. The ruins of the crumbled church are at the bottom of the gorge, the dwellings of the monks were situated on the slope of the mountains. These hermitages can only be reached by the use of steep and perilous paths. The ruins are completely abandoned.

It is possible that this monastery may have offered shelter to Nestorius, who was first exiled to Kharga Oasis, but later transferred to Akhmîm. Yet there is nothing, except traditions, which confirm this.

Note : This is not the monastery described by al-Maqrîzî as the Monastery of the Seven Mountains. (ed. Evetts, p. 315).

Lit. : Munier, H., « *Les Monuments Coptes d'après les explorations* du Père Jullien, » *Bull. Soc. Arch. Copte*, VI, 147-151.

The Monastery of St. George

The Monastery of St. George (Dair Mârî Girgis al-Hadîdî) is situated on the east bank of the Nile, about 8 km. south of Akhmîm. The monastery, which is situated on an elevation, is easily accessible, though one should obtain the

key from the Coptic priest in Akhmîm. The monastery stands but a short distance back from the Nile, and sailing past, one observes the rectangular enclosure-wall and a low dome rising above it. North of the enclosure is the village of Dair al-Hadid.

Entering the enclosure, there are several small houses, and huts, which are inhabited by Coptic families. The Church of St. George stands against the eastern wall of the enclosure and has three haikals which are dedicated to St. Michael (south), St. George (centre) and the Holy Virgin (north). The church is well preserved and offers a very good example of an Upper Egyptian Coptic Church. The nave consists of five bays from east to west. The nave is roofed with domes, which are supported by pillars set in squares at an equal distance from each other.

In addition to the three central haikals, there are two side chapels on the north and the south end of the nave. The visitor ought to note the north chapel which had a slice of it taken off, so that the apse vault and the dome are completely cut through. The church is entirely plastered and whitewashed. The principal door faces the central haikal, while two other doors give access to the chapels in the north and in the south.

The church was reconstructed in the beginning of the 19th century. Special services are conducted in the church on November 16 and May 1.

Lit. : Clarke, S., *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley*. Oxford, 1912.

Munier, H., « Les Monuments Coptes d'après le Père Michel Jullien », *Bull. Soc. Arch. Copte*, VI, 157.

The Monastery of St. Bisâda

The Monastery of St. Bisâda (Dair Apa Bisâda) is situated on the east bank of the Nile in the small village of al-Abâiwa Sharq opposite the town of al-Manshiyah, the ancient Ptolemais-Hermiou, about 18 km. south of Sohâg. The Monastery of St. Bisâda was formerly a large and beau-

tiful monastery if one judges by the few remaining ruins of the first building which have been used in the construction of the present building. The Church of St. Bisâda is situated within an enclosure.

The priest responsible for this monastery lives in al-Manshiyah, and special services are celebrated in the Church of St. Bisâda on January 5 and August 3.

The Church of St. Bisâda has three haikals which are dedicated to St. George (south), St. Bisâda (centre) and the Holy Virgin (north). Within the church, in a small chamber, are kept the relics of St. Bisâda, together with those of his brother and his sister. A fine funerary stele with a Greek inscription is placed by way of ornament over the entrance door. Moreover, there are several tombs of priests in the church, decorated with photos of the deceased.

According to tradition, the monastery was built in the 13th century.

St. Bisâda, who was employed by his father as a shepherd, had as his companion a boy named Agripidos, who herded goats. While Bisâda grew in piety, Agripidos grew in worldliness. Eventually, by coincidence, Agripidos married the daughter of Emperor Numerian, and after the emperor's death, became emperor, known as Diocletian. During the Diocletian persecution, which was carried out in Upper Egypt by Arianus, the Governor, St. Bisâda suffered martyrdom.

Lit. : Munier, H., « Les Monuments Coptes d'après le Père Michel Jullien, » *Bull. Soc. Arch. Copte,* VI, 155.

Wansleben, J. M., « Neue Beschreibung einer Reise nach Aegypten 1672-1673, » in Paulus, *Sammlung,* III, 90 ff.

3.—THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES BETWEEN GIRGA AND NAG' HAMMADI

The Monastery of St. Michael

The Monastery of St. Michael (Dair al-Malâk Mikhâîl) is situated on the east bank of the Nile, almost opposite Girga, near Nag' al-Dair.

Nag' al-Dair has attracted the attention of archaeologists because of the pre-historic cemeteries which have been discovered there in 1910. In the immediate vicinity of these cemeteries, the monastery is situated.

There is good evidence that the monastery was estalished gradually. The Church of the Angel, which has altogether five haikals, shows this gradual development insofar as the two northern haikals are obviously an addition. Each haikal is covered by a dome. The altar of the central sanctuary, which is dedicated to St. Michael, is covered with a beautiful wooden canopy. The ceiling is adorned with geometrical patterns.

West of the haikals is the usual arrangement of domes carried on arches. The pillars and arches are all of burnt brick, whereas the rest of the building is of crude brick, plastered and whitewashed.

The gynaikion, which is screened off, is situated in the southern part of the church, and the baptistery is situated in the south-eastern part of the church. Moreover, there are three tombs, enclosed by a low wall, situated in the southwestern part of the church.

Leo Africanus (1491-1552) considered this monastery as the largest and wealthiest monastery of Egypt.

Lit. : Brown, R., *The History and Description of Africa. etc.* London, 1896.

Clarke, S., *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley.* Oxford, 1912.

Wansleben, J. M., « Neue Beschreibung einer Reise nach Aegypten 1672-1673 » in Paulus, *Sammlung*, III, 90 ff.

The Monastery of St. Moses

Abydos, on the west bank of the Nile, and situated 11 km. west of al-Balyanâ, was one of the most renowned cities of ancient Egypt. It was famous as the chief seat of worship of Osiris, the god of the Underworld in Upper Egypt, and the principal sanctuary of this god was there. Tradition even declared that the head of Osiris was preserved in Abydos. The principal Pharaonic monument in Abydos is the

Temple of Seti I (1318-1298 B.C.), better known as the Memnonium. A little to the north of the Temple of Seti I is situated the sadly dilapidated Temple of Ramses II, also dedicated to Osiris.

The Monastery of St. Moses (Dair Abû Mûsâ), also known as the Monastery of St. Dimiana (Dair Sitt Dimiâna) is situated 3 km. north of the Temple of Ramses II, and can be reached without great difficulties. The visitor should note the beautiful entrance to the church. The church has seven haikals with artistically carved haikal screens. Above the individual haikal doors, icons of the respective patron saints indicate their dedication. From the north to the south, the haikals are dedicated to St. Antony, the Holy Virgin, St. Moses, St. Michael, St. Dimiana, St. George, and St. John the Baptist. Eleven domes cover the church. The Monastery of St. Moses is now inhabited by several Coptic families.

The monastery, known to Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) as the Monastery of Bani Musa, was restored at the expense of al-Safî, who was its abbot. Noteworthy in those days was its gate which was plated with iron and studded with nails. It contained a waterwheel for irrigation. The body of St. Moses, a native of al-Balyanâ, is said to have been buried there. Al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) merely states that this is a large monastery. In 1590, the monastery was reconstructed.

Lit. : Cauwenbergh, P. van, *Etude sur les moines d'Egypte depuis le Concile de Chalcédoine, etc.* Paris, 1914.

Johann Georg, *Streifzuege durch die Kirchen und Kloester Aegyptens.* Leipzig, 1914.

The Church of St. Antony at Abû Shûsha

The Coptic Orthodox Church of St. Antony is situated on the west bank of the Nile at Abû Shûsha between al-Balyanâ and Abû Tisht. The church, which stands on the very bank of the river, has three haikals which are dedicated to St. George (north), St. Antony (centre) and St. John the Baptist (south). The church is worth visiting because of its collection of icons.

4.—THE PACHOMIAN MONASTERIES BETWEEN NAG' HAMMADI AND LUXOR

The Monastery of St. Bidaba

The Monastery of St. Bidaba (Dair Anbâ Bidâba) is situated in the cultivated land about two kilometres south-west of the railway station of Nag' Hammâdi. The ancient monastery which has been placed on the side of a pool and on a mound is inhabited by several Coptic families.

Inside the surrounding wall, the buildings are constructed on various levels. The monastery has three adjoining churches, which give the impression of dark cellars. The churches are dedicated to the Holy Virgin, to St. Bidaba and to St. Sidarus the Martyr. Divine services are provided by the priest of al-Gharbî Bahgura. According to tradition, the monastery was founded by St. Helena. St. Bidaba, Bishop of Qift, suffered martyrdom at Esna under Emperor Claudius.

Lit. : Lefort, L. Th., « Les premiers monastères Pachomiens, » *Le Muséon*, LII, 9-15.

The Monastery of St. Menas

The Monastery of St. Menas (Dair Mârî Mînâ al-Agayebî) is situated about 1 km. south of the village of Hiw on the edge of the desert. To visit the monastery, one should proceed from Nag' Hammâdi in south-easterly direction along the Nile to Hiw. After passing through the village of Hiw, turn right before crossing the new bridge and follow the road parallel to the canal for 1 km. and then proceed southwards towards the desert. The monastery is actually situated in Gammana (Mahagar Hôr), about 1 km. west of the site where the road meets the desert.

The Church of St. Menas is situated at the very edge of the desert, but in the cultivated land. One enters the church through a door in the north wall.

The church has five haikals which are dedicated from north to south to St. Sidarus, the Holy Virgin, St.

Menas, St. George and St. Victor. The central altar of St. Menas is surmounted by a wooden dome. The western part of the church is of a more recent origin. The screen of the haikal of St. Victor is the oldest one, dating to 1729 A.D. The other screens belong to the first decade of the 20th century.

Noteworthy in the church is a small triptych representing St. Menas (centre) and St. Michael (right). The picture of the left portion is obliterated. Moreover, there is a good icon of St. Menas (1860).

The monastery is inhabited by seven priests with their families.

According to tradition, the site of the church was claimed by the Muslims as the burial place of a shaikh. There was a very poor man, however, who lived in Hiw and who acted as farrash at the sugar factory. One night, this man saw a vision of St. Menas who told him that he wished to have a church built. St. Menas took the farrash to a patch of halfa grass in the fields and told him to dig the whole plot which he had measured out to a depth of two and half metres. The Saint ordered the farrash to begin building the church immediately, then St. Menas vanished.

The church is referred to by al-Maqrîzî in his Khitat.

Lit. : Blackman, W. S., *The Fellahin of Upper Egypt*. London, 1927, 248-9.

The Monastery of St. Palemon

The Monastery of St. Palemon (Dair Anbâ Balamûn), also known as the Monastery of St. Mercurius (Dair Abû Saifain) is situated on the Asyût-Luxor road. Coming from Asyût, the monastery is situated about 1 km. beyond Qasr al-Sayad on the left side of the road. The visitor cannot fail to notice the monastery which is enclosed by a wall. The bell-tower and a large dome are visible from a far distance.

One enters the monastery yard through a gate in the eastern wall. The church immediately to the right is the Church of St. Mercurius (Abû Saifain). The church has three haikals, the central one is dedicated to the

Blessed Virgin Mary, the northern one to St. Macarius and the southern one to St. Mercurius. Abutting to the southern part of the church are two rooms, which at one time may have served as haikals. The most southern room contains the tomb of Qummus Hinain, whereas the other room has the appearance of a rubbish-bin. Several tombs are situated within the western part of the building.

The second church is dedicated to St. Palemon. Built in 1925, it was renovated in 1940. The church is decorated with numerous modern Byzantine wall paintings showing Biblical scenes. The church has altogether five haikals which are dedicated, from north to south, to St. Gregory (Ghargarius), St. Palemon, St. Antony, St. Mercurius, St. Dimiana.

The third church, dedicated to St. Dimiana, is no doubt the most ancient building of the monastery. It is situated about 1.50 m. below the level of the rest of the monastery. The church has one haikal, the screen of which, however, is modern (1907).

In the south-west corner of the enclosure is a necropolis which has twelve tombs. Three tombs are situated on the south side of the monastery yard. The monastery was built upon an ancient Christian site, though the buildings have undergone several transformations.

St. Palemon, a hermit of Upper Egypt, lived during the reign of St. Constantine. He was the leader of a group of ascetics when St. Pachomius joined his group. After having been St. Palemon's disciple, St. Pachomius left St. Palemon in order to found a community of his own at Tabennese which was near by. St. Palemon is said to have died as a result of his excessive fasting. A mûlid is annually observed at the Monastery of St. Palemon on February 7th in honour of the Saint.

In the beginning of the 15th century, we hear of a Qummus Murqus, hegoumenos of the Monastery of St. Palemon who experienced a vision pertaining to the translation of the relics of St. George to the Church of St. George in Old Cairo.

The Monastery of the Angel

Situated about one kilometre west of the Monastery of St. Palemon is the Monastery of the Angel (Dair al-Malâk),

on the east side of the village of al-Dâbba. The monastery is built in the same style as the Monastery of St. Palemon, especially so far as its main dome is concerned.

The monastery serves now two purposes. It comprises the church and the residence of the priest of the adjacent village of al-Dâbba.

The Cave of St. Palemon

Between the Monastery of St. Palemon and the Monastery of the Angel stretches a little isolated desert which was the site of the first monastic endeavours of St. Palemon. About 300 metres from Dair al-Malâk in a little wâdî, there are in a rock two cavities which are almost completely obstructed by rubbish, which, according to tradition, are supposed to have been a hermitage.

In this immediate vicinity, though near the cliff of the Gebel al-Tarf, the famous Gnostic papyri of Chenoboskion were discovered. The Coptic priest of Dair al-Malâk was one of the first persons to have handled this precious treasure. This library was hidden in a cemetery and belongs to the 5th century, the time when the Pachomian monasteries finally extended their influence throughout this region.

Lit. : Doresse, J., *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics.* London, 1960.
Lefort, L. Th., *Les Vies de S. Pachôme et de ses premiers successeurs.* Louvain, 1943.
Lefort, L. Th., « Les premiers monastères Pachomiens, » *Muséon,* LII.

The Ruins of the Basilica of St. Pachomius

Travelling from Qasr al-Sayad on the road to Luxor, the tourist will pass after about ten kilometres on his right the village of Fâû al-Bahrî, the Fâû of the north, situated on the banks of the Nile. Another three and half kilometres further on, and one approaches the village of Fâû al-Qiblî, the Fâû of the south, situated on the left side of the road, and partly hidden in a palm-grove. All that can be seen of the once famous basilica are several broken columns and socles west of the village of Fâû al-Qiblî.

Fâû al-Qiblî with its ruins of the famous Basilica of St. Pachomius is situated about 3 km. north of Tabenenese. Fâû or Phow (Coptic) is an ancient Christian site. In the 5th century, the famous Basilica of St. Pachomius attracted pilgrims from all over Egypt. Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) still refers to the church and monastery of St. Pachomius and mentions that this church is large and spacious, being one hundred and fifty cubits long and seventy-five cubits broad. By the 13th cent., however, the basilica had fallen into ruin. The ruins were visited by Jullien (1901), Massignon (1910) and Lefort (1937).

The Ruins of the Basilica of Denderah

A short distance from the river, on the west bank, a little to the north of the village of Denderah, near Qena, stands the Temple of Denderah, where the goddess Hathor was worshipped. The basilica was built in the immediate vicinity of the Mammesium or the «house of giving birth», which was built by Caesar Augustus.

The basilica, constructed of unusually good masonry, is built of sandstone, taken undoubtedly from the Mammesium. The carved details of the ruins correspond in many ways to those discovered at the White and Red Monasteries at Sohâg. Only of the western and northern parts are there any remains.

The town of Denderah was built by one of the daughters of the Copts in the days of Manfa'us. Abû Sâlih mentions that there was a well, square in form, the opening of which measured one hundred cubits on each side.

The *Coptic Synaxarium* (Amshîr 3) mentions the construction of a Dair Denderah near the town by Anbâ Yahûda.

Lit.: Lefort, L. Th., « Les premiers monastères Pachomiens. » *Le Muséon*, LII, 9-12.

Ladeuze, P., *Etude sur le cénobitisme Pakhomien pendant le IVe siècle et la premiere moitié du Ve.* Loewen, 1898.

The Monastery of St. Mercurius

The Monastery of St. Mercurius (Dair Abû Saifain) is situated in the eastern part of the village of Higâza on the very edge of the desert. To visit the monastery, it is advisable to proceed from Qûs in south-easterly direction via al-Ma'arrî to Higâza, a distance of approximately 12 km. The key to the monastery, which is uninhabited, is with the *umdah* of the village. One enters the monastery, which is enclosed by a wall, through a gate on the west side. After entering the enclosure, there is to the south a small gate-house, to the north a cemetery. East of the gate-house is a small inner court with the monastery well.

In the centre of the monastery, there is the Church of St. Mercurius, which is still used on Sundays for the Celebration of the Divine Liturgy. According to a local oral tradition, the church was built by St. Helena in the 4th century. The Church of St. Mercurius has three haikals which are dedicated to St. Pachomius (north), St. Mercurius (centre) and St. George (south). The haikal screen is adorned with an icon of St. Mercurius. The baptistery is situated in the south-western corner of the church. The church is 13 m. (east-west) by 10 m. (north-south), and was restored in 1911.

East of the Church of St. Mercurius there is a second inner court which leads to the Church of the Holy Virgin, and has three haikals. The church is not in use. In the north-eastern part of the monastery there is the Church of St. Bidaba, which is not used. Adjoining the former church, is the Church of St. Victor (Mârî Buqtur) with its three haikals. This church was recently restored. The churches of the Holy Virgin, St. Bidaba and St. Victor are of similar structural design. In general, the monastery is in good condition.

The Monastery of St. Pachomius

The Monastery of St. Pachomius or the Dair Anbâ Bakhûm is situated on the edge of the desert about eight kilo-

metres north-east of the ruins of the Temple of Karnak, not far from Luxor airport. The Church of St. Pachomius, which has five haikals, is located in a rectangular enclosure of considerable size. The main entrance to the church is through the northern gate of the walls and then passing through the churchyard. The women, however, have their own entrance from the south side of the church. The gynaikion is the southernmost part of the church, in which also the baptistery is situated. The lighting of the church is entirely by little holes in the domes. The church is built of burnt brick, but parts of the interior are plastered, except the domes.

The central haikal has a wooden canopy, which is worked into an octagon above. It belongs to the 19th century. In the southern part of the church are the tombs of two bishops of Luxor, and that of a priest. The monastery is inhabited by several Coptic families.

Lit. : Clarke, S., *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley*. Oxford, 1912.

Johann Georg, *Neue Streifzuege durch die Kirchen und Kloester Aegyptens*. Berlin, 1930.

5.—THE CHURCHES OF NAQADA

Those who have visited the Coptic churches and monasteries between Qamûla and Naqâda may want to rest in Naqâda where there are altogether four Coptic churches. Of these four churches, the Church of St. Dimiana and the Church of St. Michael are most interesting.

The Church of St. Dimiana is a beautiful modern and large church with three haikals which are dedicated to St. Barsum the Naked (north). St. Dimiana (centre) and St. Menas (south).

The Church of St. Michael

A little more difficult to reach is the Church of St. Michael with its five haikals dedicated to St. Victor (north), St. George, St. Michael (centre), St. Gabriel, and St. John the Baptist (south). The Church of St. Michael is decorated

with some 51 modern paintings (on the iconostasis) of the Life of Christ.

6.—THE DESERT MONASTERIES BETWEEN NAQADA AND QAMULA

The six monasteries which are situated on the edge of the ancient desert of Gabal al-Asâs, on the west bank of the Nile between the villages of Naqâda and Qamûla are of interest only to the archaeologist or student of Christian antiquities.

At one time, this desert was inhabited by famous anchorites like Elias of Mount Bishouaou and Samuel of Mount Banhadab. In the 13th century, there were numerous churches and monasteries around Qamûla. The most famous being the Churches of St. Theodore, St. Mercurius, St. George and St. Victor. There were also the two Churches of St. Sinuthius and St. John Abû Qurqâs and the Monasteries of St. Nub and St. Theodore. Today, however, all monasteries are deserted.

The monasteries can be reached by car, preferably by donkey, from Thebes. Visitors ought to make sure in advance that the taxi driver or guide is familiar with the region of Naqâda, Danfîq and Qamûla al-Ausat (the central) and Qamûla al-Qibli (the southern). Travelling from Thebes (west bank), one might visit the monasteries in the following order : The Monastery of St. Michael near Qamûla al-Qibli, the Monastery of St. Victor near Qamûla'l-Ausat, the Monastery of St. George west of Qamûla'l-Bahri (the northern) the Monastery of al-Salîb and the Monastery of Abû al-Lîf, Hagar Danfîq and the Monastery of St. Michael at 'Abd al-Rahmân Khalîl, 4 km. south-west of Naqâda. All monasteries are situated on the edge of the desert, *i.e.* none of the monasteries is situated further than one km. in the desert.

In addition to the desert monasteries, there is near Qamûla the famous Church of St. Mercurius which claims the tomb of the Patron. A large mûlid is held annually on

August 1 in commemoration of the dedication of the Church of St. Mercurius.

Lit. : Legrain, G., « Abou Seifein et les fous, » *La Revue Egyptienne*, I, 9, Sept. 5, 1912, 257-263.

The Monastery of St. Michael

The Monastery of St. Michael, or Dair al-Malâk Mikhâîl, is the southern-most monastery of the monastery group situated between Qamûla and Naqâda. To visit the monastery, the visitor is advised to hire a taxi in Thebes and to travel for 12 km. in northerly direction to the village of Qamûla, and turn to the west at the tall Sycamore tree. The monastery is situated about 1 km. west of the edge of the desert. It is enclosed by crude brick walls, and the humble domes of the churches rise like inverted cups above it. No key is required to enter the monastery. The visitor should pay attention to the large well which was once used as a *saqieh*. Many Christian tombs are situated to the south and east of the monastery.

Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) records that this monastery was also known as the Monastery of the Well, because of the excellent water of its well. The monastery contained a keep, and was surrounded by enclosing walls, and it is said to have possessed the body of St. Pisentius, the hegoumenos of the monasteries of Upper Egypt.

The monastery is entered through a gate in the east wall. There are two churches in the monastery, both of which are sadly ruined. In the southern church one can still identify three haikals. The northern church is entirely ruined and much imagination is required to reconstruct it. It would seem that this church also had three haikals. Of the two churches, the northern one is apparently the more recent. A few fragments of stone with hieroglyphs were taken from some ancient temple. For those interested in early Christian architecture, a visit to the Monastery of St. Michael would certainly prove to be of interest.

The Monastery of St. Victor

About 2 km. north of the Monastery of St. Michael, and 1 km. north-west of the village Qamûla'l-Ausat, there is

situated the Monastery of St. Victor or the Dair Mârî Bûqtur. The monastery can be reached either by taxi, or preferably by donkey. The monastery, enclosed by a wall, stands upon an elevation from which one has a panoramic view across the Nile Valley. One should pay attention to the deep well on the south side of the new brick church. West of the monastery, there are many tombs.

> The outer court of the monastery is entered through a gate in the east wall. In the south-western corner of the court is the tomb of Basilius Ghali (1938). The ancient church, built of mud bricks, has four haikals which are dedicated to St. Victor, St. Michael, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Menas. The wall paintings in the haikals have almost entirely disappeared. Situated south of the monastery, there is the new Church of St. Victor with its entrance facing the west. Note the Coptic cross above the entrance. The key to the new church can be obtained from the Coptic priest in Qamûla.
>
> The monastery was rarely visited by Western pilgrims. Wansleben (1672) refers briefly to the monastery.

The Monastery of St. George

The Monastery of St. George or the Dair Mârî Girgis, known also as the Dair al-Magma, west of Qamûla'l-Bahri is situated about 500 metres west of the edge of the desert on a slight elevation. It is the largest and most significant one of the monasteries between Qamûla and Naqâda. On certain occasions, Divine Services are conducted in the monastery.

The monastery, which is enclosed by a high wall, consists of a group of four churches, three of which are attached to each other, the fourth one standing by itself, west of the others and more or less ruined in the debris of the surrounding buildings. The entrance to the monastery is through a gate in the north wall. The three churches standing together are dedicated to St. Michael (northern church), St. George (central church), and St. John (southern church). All three

churches differ considerably in their construction and were built at different times.

The Church of St. Michael is entered through a hole in the north wall of the nave of the adjoining Church of St. George. The main apse (furthest to the north) was decorated with beautiful wall paintings representing Christ surrounded by angels, which unfortunately are sadly ruined.

The Church of St. George is of the basilican type, though ruined. The wall paintings which once adorned the haikal are also largely destroyed. South of the Church of St. George is the Church of St. John which belongs to a later period than the other two churches. This church has been entirely rebuilt. In the narthex of this church is a tank sunk below the level of the floor, which was probably used at one time for the Service of the Blessing of the Water on the Feast of the Epiphany. A few metres south of the church was a large well which was used as the *saqieh*. A small church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, is sadly ruined. It is situated between the Church of St. George and the ruined cells in the western part of the monastery.

The Monastery of the Holy Cross

Situated exactly on the edge of the desert in the small village of Hagar Danfîq is the small Monastery of the Holy Cross or the Dair al-Salîb. In order to visit the monastery, it is advisable to obtain permission to visit the church from the Coptic priest in Naqâda, though the key to the monastery is with the porter in Hagar Danfîq. One enters the monastery through a gate in the north wall.

The monastery has two churches. The ancient church, situated in the western part of the monastery, is in a state of ruin. This church must be considered of great antiquity. Hieroglyphs on the columns suggest that some of the building material was taken from a Pharaonic temple. The monastery was demolished in 1917.

The new church, situated in the eastern part of monastery, has three haikals and is adorned with several modern

and artistically inferior wall paintings. Occasionally, the church is used for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The monastery is mentioned by J.M. Wansleben (1672-1673).

Lit.: *Comptes-rendus du Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'art. ar.*, XXXII, 527.

Monneret de Villard, U., *Les Couvents près de Sôhâg*. Milan, 1927, Fig. 97.

The Monastery of Abû al-Lîf

The Monastery of Abû al-Lîf (Father with the white beard) is situated in the village of Hagar Danfîq about 50 metres east of the Monastery of the Holy Cross. The key to this monastery is with the Coptic priest in Naqâda. One enters the monastery through a gate in the north wall. The new church is situated in the eastern part of the monastery, whereas the ancient church, which is sadly ruined, is situated in the southern part of the monastery.

The Monastery of St. Michael near Naqâda

The Monastery of St. Michael or Dair Malâk Mikhâîl, which is situated about 4 km. south-west of Naqâda, is surrounded by a large desert necropolis which extends especially north of the monastery. In order to enter the Church of St. Michael, the visitor should obtain the key from the Coptic priest in Naqâda. The monastery, which is situated on a slight elevation, can be entered through gates in the northern and southern walls. The Church of St. Michael is situated in the eastern part of the enclosure and is roofed with numerous domes. Another church, though completely ruined, is situated in the south-west corner of the enclosure.

About 50 metres north of the monastery is a new church with one haikal. This church, which is not finished, is not locked.

Lit.: Dorosse, J., « Saints coptes de Haute-Egypte ; les monastères de Djêmeh à Benhadab aux alentours du VIe siècle », *Journal Asiatique*, 1948, 247-270.

7.—THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES OF THEBES

The visitor to the Pharaonic necropolis of Thebes on the west bank of the Nile, opposite to Luxor, should note that, from the 4th to the 7th century, many of the Pharaonic buildings and tombs were used by Christians either as dwellings for monks and anchorites, or as churches. At Thebes, as throughout the Nile Valley, all varieties of Coptic asceticism appear to have flourished. There were the Pachomian coenobitic communities on the one hand, and the solitaries living with one or several disciples in some tomb or cave on the other hand. The discoveries of Coptic documents, mummies and graffiti substantiate that sizable Christian communities inhabited Thebes.

Medinet Hâbû

The centre of the Christian community of Thebes was the town of Jeme which may have extended from Dair al-Medinah to Medinet Hâbû. With the end of paganism, and before the Temple of Medinet Hâbû was buried in the sand, a church called by some the Cathedral of St. Athanasius, was built within the second court of the Temple of Ramses III. On the columns of the church many Christians scribbled their names, while others wrote short prayers. The remains of the church, however, were cleared in 1895 by the Service des Antiquités.

Dair al-Rûmî

Up on the hill which divides the Valley of the Queens into two branches, there are the remains of a small monastery, known to some as the Dair al-Rûmî.

Dair al-Medinah

More important than the settlement in the Valley of the Queens was the Dair al-Medinah. The little Ptolemaic Temple, begun by Ptolemy IV, now called Dair al-Medinah, owes its name to a Christian monastery, the church of which may have been dedicated to St. Isidorus, of whom, however, very little is known. The mutilation of many of the inscriptions and reliefs in the temple is also due to the monks who used the temple as a monastery.

Dair al-Bahrî

One of the most splendid temples of Thebes is the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Dair al-Bahrî or the Northern Monastery. This temple was built by Queen Hatshepsut, the sister, wife, and co-regent of Thutmosis III. Christian monks settled here on the Upper Terrace. Today, all traces of the monastery, situated at one time in the large Hypostyle Hall of the Upper Terrace, are cleared away. The monastery had a square brick tower nearly 8 metres high, and the buildings were of mud bricks and stones taken from the 18th Dynasty walls.

The Monasteries of SS. Cyriacus and Epiphanius

The Monastery of Cyriacus extended roughly from tomb 65 (Nebamon) to tomb 67 (Hapuseneb) of the Noblemen's Tombs, on the eastern slope of the hill Shaikh 'Abd al-Kurnah. From the Monastery of Cyriacus one can easily reach the Monastery of Epiphanius which is situated about 20 metres above the road to the Dair al-Bahrí.

The Monastery of Epiphanius which was excavated in 1912 by the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition was built on the site of the 11th Dynasty tomb of the Vizier Daga, about 400 metres south of Dair al-Bahrî. Only few remains of the monastery can be seen today. The monastery is first mentioned in a will of the 7th century monks Jacob and Elias.

The Monastery of Phoebammon

The Monastery of St. Phoebammon, excavated in 1948 by the Coptic Archaeological Society, is situated about 8 km. west of the Valley of the Queens. It can be reached only with considerable difficulty, by crossing the desert of al-Kola al-Hamra, and it is absolutely necessary to employ the services of a competent guide. This monastery, possibly of the 4th century, which was built, presumably with one or two floors against the mountain cliffs, yielded a wealth of Coptic graffiti. This monastery would be of interest only to archaeologists or Coptologists.

Other Hermitages

Other Christian monasteries and cells of anchorites existed on the hilltop of Kurnet Murrat, in the Ramesseum, and on the hillside of Shaikh 'Abd al-Kurnah. Of special interest to the visitor of the Christian sites in Thebes is the Tomb of Ramses IV (No. 2) which is one of the finest examples of the royal tombs of the 20th Dynasty.

> This tomb shows the most evident signs of actual occupation by early Christian anchorites, as seen by the large number of Coptic graffiti which are scribbled all over the walls, including a number of Coptic inscriptions written in red paint. One of the drawings of the two praying saints with arms upraised, is Apa Amonius the Martyr, probably the Bishop of Esna. Another anchorite has drawn up a list of seven famous Coptic hermits : Apa Paul, Apa Antony, Apa Pachom, Apa Palemon, Apa Petronius, Apa Theodore, Apa Horsiese. On the left wall there is a Coptic cross.

Directly across the Tomb 2 there is the intended Tomb of Ramses III (No. 3). Though graffiti and Corinthian capitals were seen there in the past, today, the tomb is blocked up, and no Christian remains are visible. The Tomb of Ramses VI (No. 9) contains a number of Coptic and Greek graffiti.

In order to derive the full benefit of a visit to Christian Thebes, it is advisable to make sure in advance that the dragoman is familiar not only with the Pharaonic but also with the Christian sites of Thebes.

Lit. : Bachtly, Ch., *Le Monastère de Phoebammon dans la Thébaïde.* Cairo, 1963.

Mirrit Boutros Ghali, *Note sur la découverte du monastère de Phoebammon dans la montagne thébaine.* Le Caire, 1948.

Winlock, H. E. and Crum, W. E., Evelyn-White, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes,* I, II, New York, 1926.

8. — THE CHURCHES OF LUXOR

Luxor, situated on the east bank of the Nile, used to be an insignificant village until the excavations of the temples in and around Luxor by Maspero (1883) and de Morgan. In

the latter part of the 19th century, Luxor became a centre for tourism, and has remained such to this day.

The Coptic Churches

Luxor belongs to the Coptic diocese of Qena and Qûs, with the Coptic bishop residing in Qena. There are two Coptic Orthodox Churches in Luxor : The Church of St. Antony (1826) in Old Luxor is interesting because of its five haikals which are dedicated to St. Antony, St. Michael, St. Pachomius, the Holy Virgin Mary, and St. Takla Haymanot. The Church of the Holy Virgin at Karnak Street (1919) has three haikals which are dedicated to the Holy Virgin, St. George and St. Andrew.

The Catholic Churches

The Catholics maintain a Franciscan Church and a Coptic Catholic Church in Luxor.

The Protestant Churches

In addition to the Coptic Evangelical Church in Luxor, there are several other Evangelical Churches in the town, e.g. the Holiness Church at Sharia Andarâûs, the Church of the Plymouth Brethren at Sharia Cleopatra and others.

9. — THE CHURCHES IN THE TEMPLES IN AND AROUND LUXOR

The Church in the Temple of Luxor

The Temple of Luxor was built by Amenophis III (18th dynasty) on the site of an older sanctuary of sandstone, and was dedicated to Amon, Mut and Khons. During the religious revolution of Amenophis IV, the representations and the name of Amon were obliterated, and a sanctuary of the sun was built beside it. Following the introduction of Christianity, parts of the temple were converted into a church.

The Christian church is approached through the Pronaos or Vestibule of the temple. To the left stands an Altar which is dedicated to the Emperor Constantine with a Latin inscription.

The complete text of the inscription of the altar is as follows :

Fortissimo Ac Piissimo
Imp. D. N. Fl. Va. Constantino
P. F. Invicto Augusto
Val. Rom. Et. Alcaup. Dux
Leg. Et. Theb. Vtrarumque
Libb. N. B. Q. Eivs Semper
Dicatissimus

Indeed, it is difficult to know whether this altar dedicated to Constantine belongs already to the Christian or still to the pre-Christian period.

Adjoining the rear wall are two chapels, which are dedicated to Mut and Khons. A door in the centre of the rear wall gives access to a smaller hall which originally had eight columns and which served as a Christian church.

In the niche one can discover the remains of wall paintings. Unfortunately, they are in such a mutilated state that it is impossible to reconstruct the themes. On the right hand of the apse are three persons, in the apse one can still identify two heads. On the southern wall there are two rows of paintings, though it is impossible to come to any conclusion as to their identification.

The wall paintings may belong to the end of the 4th century. Their destruction took place in the latter part of the 19th century.

Numerous stones from the Temple of Luxor which are decorated with crosses and Coptic inscriptions are stored in the magazine on the east side of the Temple.

The Church in the Temple of Karnak

The ruins of the great Temple at Karnak are perhaps the most wonderful of any in Egypt, and they certainly merit many visits from the tourist or student. The visitor to the ancient Christian church in the Temple of Karnak will

pass through the Great Court, the Great Hypostyle Hall, and then through the Central Court, the courts of Thutmosis I and Amenophis II and Thutmosis III to the remains of the Temple of the Middle Kingdom. From here, one enters the Great Festal Hall of Thutmosis III, where in the 4th century the Christians established a church.

In the Festal Hall of Thutmosis III, the paintings of saints can be clearly identified on six columns, for the heads of these figures are relatively well preserved. The space between the central columns was used for worship purposes. Unfortunately, it is impossible to reconstruct the ancient church.

The Church in the Temple of Medâmût

Travelling from Luxor in northerly direction, the visitor passes, just beyond the Temple of Karnak, the village of Medâmût. The Temple of Menthu is situated at the outskirts of the village. It was founded by Amenhotep II (18th dynasty).

A small church was built into the temple of which the ruins are still traceable. The church must have had three naves, and the remains of the pillars can still be identified. As in the case of the churches in the temples of Luxor and Karnak, this church ought to be assigned to the 4th or 5th century.

The Church in the Temple of Tôd

The student of Christian archaeology and architecture may want to visit the Temple at Tôd. The village of Tôd, the ancient Tuphium, is situated 25 km. south of Luxor, on the east bank of the Nile opposite Armant. The temple belongs to the 5th dynasty, but was reconstructed in the 11th dynasty. The temple is dedicated to Mont.

The church is situated in the north-eastern corner of the large temple area. Apart from the apse, which is relatively well preserved, numerous stones with Coptic decorations have been discovered.

The church was destroyed in the Middle Ages. Later another church was built on the edge of the desert. The

Church is dedicated to St. Abshai. The Christian cemetery in the immediate vicinity was explored by Maspero, where the corpse of a bishop and pieces of his vestments were discovered.

St. Abshai al-Qabrin was a devout ascete of Tôd. He is said to have read through the whole book of Jeremiah, and when he had finished, Jeremiah appeared and embraced him. He is commemorated in the Coptic Church on the 25th of Kîhak, the 3rd of January.

10. — THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES BETWEEN LUXOR AND ASWAN

The Monastery of St. Theodore

The Monastery of St. Theodore the Warrior (Dair al-Shahîd Tadrus al-Muhâreb) is situated about 500 metres south-west of the Temple of Medinet Hâbû (Thebes) in the desert. The monastery, therefore, is easily accessible, and it is well known to taxi-drivers and guides. The key to the monastery should be obtained from the Coptic priest in Aiyub al-Dighelm near Medinet Hâbû.

After entering the monastery, one passes through a small courtyard to the church. The Church of St. Theodore is divided into five sections from east to west, the most eastern being the haikals, the most western being the relatively new gynaikion. The church has four haikals which are dedicated from north to south to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Claudius, St. Theodore and St. Michael. The haikal screens are adorned with modern religious pictures. The roof consists of 17 domes which rest upon arches. The church is lighted through small holes in the domes. The baptistery is situated at the southern end of the church.

St. Theodore is one of the most popular Egyptian Warrior-saints. His biography is written in an Encomium by St. Gregory of Nyssa. According to Coptic tradition, St. Theodore was a general. In Euchaites, Persia, he fought and defeated a dragon. The Saint was tortured and suffered martyrdom during the Diocletian persecution.

The Ruins of the Monastery of the Waterwheel

The Monastery of the Waterwheel or the Dair al-Saqiah is situated 15 km. north of Armant in a large wâdî which opens out into a stony desert. At the foot of a high cliff which bends over the remains of the monastic buildings is an impressive rectangular enclosure of 60 m. by 80 m. In the midst of this enclosure on a rock there rise the remains of buildings of crude bricks. At the foot of the cliffs are two caves, and in front of them the church was built. The remains of small columns and capitals substantiate this.

One approaches this site by a path of large stone steps. At another place, where the cliff is less abrupt, some buildings have stories which cling to parts of the rock. In the most unincumbent part of this vast enclosure is a deep hole which marks the site of a well and a waterwheel. At the bottom of another excavation is an enormous antique capital. Here and there one recognizes the remains of out-buildings with a pebble pavement. Broken stelae mark the site of the ancient cemetery. Everywhere there are remains of potsherds, painted plates and vases.

This monastery is similar in many ways to the Monastery of St. Phoebammon.

Lit. : Doresse, J., « Monastères Coptes aux environs d'Armant en Thébaïde, » *Analecta Bollandiana*, LXVII, 327-349.

The Ruins of the Monasteries near Armant

The region around the town of Armant was one of the prominent monastic centres. Significant collections of Christian papyri and ostraka have come from this area, and many Christian stelae which are now exhibited in the various museums have their origin in this general area.

The Distant Monastery

About 10 kilometres north-east of Armant in the desert is situated a late Roman temple dedicated to the gods Amon and Mont. This building is known today as the Distant Mon-

astery or the Dair al-Shalouit. Whether this was actually a monastery or not is difficult to determine. There is no question, however, that this site was once inhabited by Christians. Remains of crude bricks still emerge from the sand and the flat roof of the temple is covered with Christian graffiti and drawings.

The Monastery of al-Miseikra

About 9 kilometres north-west of Armant in the stony desert is a vast field of ruins, which is known as the Dair al-Miseikra or the Dair al-Nâmûs. From the rubbish heaps there emerge the remains of several large buildings, some of which had more than one story. The crude brick walls are pierced with little ogival windows. Here and there one discovers a capital. Nearby are the remains of a large cemetery from which many of the stelae came that are now in museums.

The Monastery of the Christians

A short distance to the north (one kilometre) of Dair al-Miseikra are the ruined walls of a square tower of several stories surrounded by the remains of enclosure walls. These ruins are situated on the slope of a hill. The Monastery of the Christians or the Dair al-Nasâra may have been considered as a stage between the cultivated land and the hermitages of the inner desert. West of the Dair al-Nasâra are the remains of the Monastery of St. Posidonius and numerous hermitages.

The Buried Monastery

Ten kilometres west of Armant is a large mound with the remains of several buildings. This site was at one time a large monastery. The walls are of crude bricks which are pierced with little ogival windows. The ground is covered with debris and potsherds as well as fragments of glass. These ruins are also known as the White Monastery or the Dair al-Abiad.

The Ruins of the Church in Armant

From the 4th century until the early Middle Ages, Armant was the centre of a large administrative area and the seat of a bishop. The church of Armant, of which only the ruined red granite columns now remain, was one of the finest and largest churches in Egypt. The church is situated just outside the temple area, opposite the school.

> In the Coptic Synaxarium, this ancient church is referred to as the Church al-Gishoutah, and Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) mentions in Armant the Church of the Holy Virgin. When an altar was consecrated here in 1084-85 A.D., some fragments of the vessels which had contained the water of consecration were taken and thrown into the well within the church.

There is no doubt that many other churches existed in the town, and the neighbouring desert was a hive of monks. The best known monasteries in the immediate vicinity of Armant were the Dair Anbâ Darîûs and the Dair Anbâ Ezekiel.

The 4th century Christian town of Armant was excavated in 1935-1937. The buildings were of a rather poor construction, but even from them it was evident that some ancient Egyptian customs had survived, notably the footbath inside the door of the house.

Lit. : Jomard, *Description de l'Egypte*. Antiq. I, 15-16.

Mond and Myers, *The Bucheum*, I, II, III, *1934 ; Cemeteries of Armant*, I, (2 vols.), 1937 ; *Temples of Armant*, I, II, 1940.

Pococke, R., *A Description of the East*. Vol. I, London, 1743.

Winkler, H. A., *Rock Drawings of Southern Upper Egypt*. I, II, 1938-39.

The Monastery of St. Abshai

The Monastery of St. Abshai (Dair Anbâ Ibshai) is situated in the eastern part of the village of Tôd, at the edge of the desert. Tôd, known on account of its temple, is situated 25 km. south of Luxor. The monastery, which lies on the summit of a small elevation, is noteworthy because of some thirty inscribed blocks of stone which were used in the con-

struction of the monastery. These stones, at one time, belonged to the Temple of Thutmosis III.

The older part of the monastery with its several domes was built on the plan of a square. Later, however, the monastery was enlarged.

The monastery is dedicated to St. Abshai, who was an ascete of Tôd.

Lit. : Vercoutter, J., « Le Dair Copte de Tod et les 'Remplois' de Thoutmosis III, » *Annales du Service des Antiquités*, XLVII, 217-222.

The Monastery of St. George

Those travelling from Luxor (Thebes) to Esna on the west bank of the Nile, may wish to stop at the village of Dimuqrat (half way between Luxor and Esna) to visit the Monastery of St. George (Dair Mârî Girgis). The monastery is situated 4 km. west of Dimuqrat on the edge of the desert. Those who intend to visit the monastery should obtain the key from the janitor *(bawab)* in Dimuqrât. The monastery can be easily reached by car. A wall (2 m. high) encloses the five feddan (about 5 acres) courtyard.

The Church of St. George with its twenty-one domes and six haikals is an impressive structure.

In the north-eastern part of the church there are two rooms for the Bishop of Luxor when he visits the monastery at the annual mûlid, which is held from November 10th-16th. Every year, thousands of pilgrims attend this great feast commemorating the consecration of the Church of St. George.

The six haikals of the Church of St. George are dedicated to St. Pachomius, St. Mercurius, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. George, St. Paul the Theban, and St. Michael. The new haikal screen (1960) is adorned with inexpensive religious pictures. The baptistery is situated in the north-west corner of the church. The gynaikion is in the western part of the church.

The Monastery of St. Matthew the Potter

Travelling along the west bank of the Nile from Thebes southwards to Esna, the visitor passes the village of Asfûn, which is about 12 km. north of Esna. From Asfûn the Monastery of St. Matthew the Potter (Dair al-Fâkhûrî) can be reached either by jeep or by donkey. The key to the monastery should be obtained from the Coptic priest in Esna. The distance from Asfûn to the monastery is about 7 km. The monastery, which is enclosed by a high wall, is situated in the desert. In front of the monastery there are several Christian tombs which are interesting because of their picturesque cupolas and crosses. These tombs are said to belong to the 14th and 15th century.

The *History of the Patriarchs* records that Matthew the Priest, who also was a fisherman, built a monastery in the days of the Patriarch Alexander II (704-729 A.D.) and that many became monks with him there.

In the 10th century the monastery was destroyed by Bedouins, though shortly afterwards it was rebuilt. Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) briefly mentions the Church of St. Matthew the Potter and al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) writes : « At Asfûn there was a large monastery, and Asfûn was one of the finest towns in Egypt, and the monks of the monastery there were famous for their learning and intelligence. With Asfûn, its monastery was also destroyed, and this was the most remote of the monasteries in Upper Egypt ».

The beautiful wall paintings in the Church of St. Matthew the Potter are considered to be from the 11th to the 13th century. They represent Christ and the Twelve Apostles as well as other Saints. The angles of the church are adorned with paintings of the Seraphim and Saints. During the past forty years a great deal of vandalism has destroyed many of the paintings. Lefort, who visited the site in 1939 considered this monastery one of the finest testimonies of ancient monastic life in the Nile Valley. The church has three haikals. The tomb of St. Matthew the Potter is situated in the church. According to tradition, this Saint was buried in a clay casket.

St. Matthew the Potter was a native of Bishnai. He became a monk in the Church of the Holy Virgin of al-

Maqbabat, and later went to Esna, and from there to Asfûn, where he founded the above mentioned monastery. Many miracles are related to him.

Lit. : Sauneron, Serge, « Les Neuvième et Dixième Campagnes Archéologiques à Esna (1967-68), *Bull. de l'Inst. Franç. d'Archéologie Orientale*, 1969, LXVII, pp. 101-103.

The Ruins of the Monastery of the Greek

About four kilometres north of Esna, on the eastern bank of the Nile, is the village of al-Dair. This village takes its name from an ancient Coptic monastery, the site of which is still marked by a *saqieh* and some ruined walls of burnt brick.

The student of Christian archaeology should ask for Ezbet Hamadiya, south of the village of al-Dair. A little north of Ezbet Hamadiya is the Ezbet Hamidiya, west of which is the site of the ruins of the monastery of the Greek, known also as the Dair al-Rûmaniya. The site of the monastery is known as the Ezbet Mahmûd.

About five kilometres north of Ezbet Hamadiya is the village of Hamadat with the railways station of Matâna.

Lit. : Palanque, Ch., « Rapport sur les fouilles d'El Der ». *Bull. Inst. Franç. Arch. Orient.* II, 163-170.

The Hermitages east of Esna

Already in 1895, Sayce discovered a number of hermitages in the desert east of Esna. Belonging to the 6th and 7th century, these hermitages are of different types, of which there are at least twelve. The ordinary hermitage is a subterranean structure with a staircase leading to an inner court without a roof. This court gives access to as many as five rooms, namely, a storage room, an oratory, a room annexed to the oratory, a kitchen and a bed room.

Lit. : Sauneron, Serge, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-111.

The Monastery of the Holy Martyrs

Esna, known to the ancient Egyptians as Sent and to the Greeks as Latopolis, has been the home of Christian monks and anchorites from the 4th century onwards. Coptic records frequently refer to monks who lived in and around Esna. In the reign of Decius (249-251 A.D.), the last of the Roman emperors whose name appears on the walls of the Temple of Esna (situated in the middle of the town), it was decreed that every Christian should offer sacrifices to the Roman gods. Those who complied received certificates from the magistrates, while those who refused suffered death.

The Monastery of the Three Thousand Six Hundred Holy Martyrs (Dair Manaos wa al-Shuhadâ) is situated about 6 km. south-west of Esna on the edge of the desert. One can reach the monastery without difficulty by car from Esna. The monastery, which is enclosed by a wall, contains two churches, the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary (built about 1931) and the ancient Church of the Holy Martyrs.

> The old Church of the Holy Martyrs is, without question, one of the most beautiful churches in Upper Egypt. On one of the wall paintings in the church one finds the date 502 A.M., which is 786 A.D. The consecration of the Church of the Holy Martyrs is mentioned in the Coptic Synaxarium on the 19th of Tûbah or January 27th. Because of its alterations and additions, the church can be considered as comprising actually two churches. The three haikals in the eastern part of the church are dedicated, from north to south, to St. George, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Holy Martyrs of Esna. To be noted are the numerous well preserved wall paintings which adorn the Sanctuary of the Holy Martyrs. Two additional haikals are situated in the north-western corner of the church. In addition, five tombs are situated in the church.
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> The new Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is situated south of the Church of the Holy Martyrs. The church has three haikals which are dedicated to St. George, the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Michael. The baptistery is in the south-western corner of the church. The church is decorated with numerous paintings executed in a primitive manner, which are the religious

expression of the many pilgrims who annually come to the monastery for the Festival (mûlid) of St. Amonius, Bishop of Esna, on December 23rd.

St. Amonius was consecrated bishop to the See of Esna by Patriarch Peter I (301-311 A.D.). Tradition asserts that he built the monastery, where he spent from Tuesday to Friday every week, coming back to Esna to spend from Saturday to Monday amongst his people.

In 1887 the monastery was visited by Ch. E. Wilbour and E. H. Blashfield, who sketched the church, showing two haikals and some of the early medieaval wall paintings.

A little to the north of the monastery are the ruins of another very ancient monastery which was dedicated to St. Isaac.

Visitors to the monastery should call at the new Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Esna for the key. If no one is there, one should go to the old Church of St. Delagi in Esna. If visitors have to spend a night in Esna, there are two hotels, the Hotel Tawfik al-Ashri and the Hotel Sobhy Ghâlî.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Esna

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Esna was consecrated in 1958. The large and spacious church has three haikals which are dedicated to St. George (north), the Blessed Virgin Mary (centre) and St. Michael (south). The baptistery is situated south of the sanctuary of St. Michael.

The iconostasis is adorned with the following icons of St. Macarius, St. Shenute, St. Antony, St. Paul the Theban, St. Mark, St. George, St. Amonius of Esna, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Christ, St. John the Baptist, St. Paul, St. Michael, St. Gregory, St. Basil, St. John of Damascus, St. Athanasius.

The Monastery of St. Pachomius

After having visited the famous Temple of Horus (begun in 237 B.C. by Ptolemy III and completed in 57 B.C.), one may wish to visit the Monastery of St. Pachomius (Dair An-

bâ Bakhûm). The monastery is situated on the west bank of the Nile, about 7 km. west of Edfu, on the edge of the desert and on the slope of a hill. It can be easily reached by horse-carriage or donkey from Edfu. The road runs parallel to an irrigation canal. Visitors should obtain the key to the monastery from the Coptic priest at Edfu.

The Monastery of St. Pachomius is surrounded by crude brick walls inside of which is the Church of St. Pachomius. The Church has four haikals which are dedicated, from north to south, to St. Pachomius, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, and St. John the Baptist. The baptistery is situated in the south-western corner of the church. The gynaikion is at the westernmost end of the church. The icons which represent St. Pachomius, the Resurrection, the Crucifixion and the Blessed Virgin Mary, are of inferior quality.

The Ruins of the Monastery at Gabal al-Silsilah

At Hagar or Gabal al-Silsilah the Nile narrows very much, and at one time it was even believed that a cataract existed here. The site is of historical interest insofar as the ancient Egyptians quarried here the greater part of the sandstone used by them in the buildings at Thebes, and the names of the kings inscribed in the caves show that these quarries were used from the earliest to the latest periods.

On the west bank, south of the Gabal al-Silsilah, is Kom al-Resras, with the lower courses of the walls of a small rectangular temple. Almost half a kilometre to the north are the ruins of a Coptic monastery. Between the monastery ruins and the village of Fâris are Roman and Christian cemeteries, which, however, have been plundered.

Another 500 metres north of the Roman cemetery is the village of al-Hammam, the Bath. Al-Hammam may have been a Coptic building, since Coptic graffiti were discovered on the south side of the village. Gabal al-Silsilah is situated between Edfu and Kom Ombo, about 10 km. south of the railway station of Nag Kagug.

Lit.: Sayce, A. H., « Excavations at Gebel Silsila, » *Annales du Service*, CII, pp. 97-106.

The Ruins of the Monastery of Mount Isis at al-Kubbaniya

Those who have read the report of the excavations of the Monastery of Mount Isis by Dr. Hermann Junker (1910-1911) and are interested to visit the site of the ruins should sail from Aswân 12 km. northwards to the village of al-Kubbaniya (west bank). One should allow three hours when sailing a feluca. Unfortunately, the excavated ruins are covered again with sand except for two walls and a large amount of potsherds. The foundations of the monastery walls are still visible. The visitor is advised to return to Aswân either by train from al-Khattara or by boat.

Lit. : Junker, H., *Das Kloster am Isisberg.* Wien, 1922.

The Ruins of the Monastery near the Tomb of Khunes

Those who are able to stay longer than a day in Aswân are advised to visit the Tombs of the Nobles which are situated on the west bank of the Nile, opposite the northern end of Elephantine Island. On the summit of the cliff which contains the tombs, there is the so-called Qubbat Shaikh Alî Abû al-Hawa, a Muslim tomb. At Aswân we can clearly discern the southern and the northern group of Tombs.

It should be noted, however, that the ascent to these tombs and to the ruins of the monastery is somewhat fatiguing. A small and rather sandy path leads to the southern group of Tombs, the most important to be visited being that of Sirenpowet, son of Satet-hotep, and a nomarch under Amenemhet II (1920 B.C.). From there one passes to the Tomb of Aku which belongs to the same period. A little further on we come to the Tomb of Khunes, inside which one sees some mud-brick chambers, and some others on the slope beside it. These chambers formed a part of a monastery which is said to have been dedicated to St. George or St. Laurentius. It seems that the Tomb of Khunes was used as a dwelling-place by an anchorite. Perhaps, during his

Lit. : Habachi, L., *Aswân.* Cairo, 1959.

life time or shortly after his death, his disciples settled near the tomb, where they established a church and a monastery. The monastery was built a little above the tomb. Numerous Coptic graffiti and drawings of warrior-saints in red paint, though slightly effaced, can be easily recognized.

The Monastery of St. Simeon

The Monastery of St. Simeon (Dair Anbâ Sam'ân) is situated on the west bank of the Nile, at about the same height as the southern point of Elephantine Island. The monastery can be reached either by crossing the desert from Qubbat al-Hawa, the Rock-tombs (about 50 minutes), or by sailing across the Nile from Aswân and landing near the Tomb of Aga Khan and then walking up the sandy Wâdî al-Qurqur (15 minutes).

> The Monastery of St. Simeon was originally dedicated to Anbâ Hadra of Aswân. Anbâ Hadra married at the age of eighteen, but preserved his chastity, and later became a disciple of St. Baiman. After eight years of ascetic practices under the supervision of his teacher, he retired to the desert and applied himself to the study of the life of St. Antony. Later he was consecrated Bishop of Aswân by Patriarch Theophilus (384-412 A.D.).
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> The monastery which was built in the 7th century and reconstructed in the 10th century was destroyed in 1173. In the 13th century, the monastery was in ruin. The oldest Arabic inscription states that a certain Mutammar Alî visited the monastery in the year 694 A.H. or 1295 A.D.

The Monastery of St. Simeon is of considerable architectural interest, and though it is ruined, its main features are well preserved. The monastery is surrounded by a wall, more than six metres high, the lower part of which is built of rough stone, the upper part of mud bricks. One enters the monastery through the gate of a small tower in the east wall. Within the enclosure are two main groups of buildings. At the lower level lies the church, which consists of a nave, the aisles, the choir and the sacristies. The dome of the choir was adorned with a beautiful Byzantine painting of the twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse, and opposite the

choir was another representation of Christ with two angels bowing before him. There are numerous Coptic inscriptions in the sacristies. The monks lived in the northern section of the monastery which is a two-story building. The second story had a large central vaulted hall with cells opening on each side of the long corridor. Each cell had two or more mastabas built of stone for the monks to sleep in. At the north-west angle was the refectory. Below the main building are several rock-hewn cells and a rock chapel with a painted ceiling and pictures of saints. In the monastery were found numerous slabs of stones giving the history of many of the monks. The wine-press, stables, kitchen and other rooms were situated on the southern end of the monastery. The Church of St. Simeon is still used for occasional services by the Copts of Aswân. Studies of the Monastery of St. Simeon were made by de Bock, Gayet, De Morgan, Clédat, Clarke and Monneret de Villard.

Lit. : Clarke, S., *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley*. Oxford, 1912.

Monneret de Villard, U., « Il Monasterio di Simona, » *Annales du Service*, XXVI, 211-245.

Monneret de Villard, U., *Description Générale du Monastère de St. Siméon d'Aswân*. Milan, 1927.

The Church of the Holy Virgin

The Coptic Orthodox Church of the Holy Virgin is situated at Sharia al-Kenisa in the old section of Aswân. The Church was built in 1910. It has three haikals, which are dedicated to St. George (north), the Holy Virgin (centre) and St. Michael (south). The baptistery is situated in the south-eastern part of the church.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES OF THE FAYYUM

For those living in Cairo, the Coptic monasteries in the Fayyûm are easily accessible by car. The visitor may select one or two monasteries to visit on one occasion, since it is virtually impossible to see all sites in a single day.

The Oasis of Fayyûm is situated 85 kilometres southwest of Cairo and can be reached either by train from Cairo, changing at al-Wasta, or by car on the asphalt road which branches off the Cairo-Alexandria Desert Highway near Mena House. There is every reason to believe that Christianity found its way into the Fayyûm at the same time it entered the Nile Delta or Lower Egypt, and that the desert around the Fayyûm Oasis and especially the Mountain of al-Qalamûn was inhabited by monks as early as the fourth century. Of the thirty-five monasteries which existed in the greater Fayyûm region in the early Middle Ages, only four can now be visited.

The Christian Churches of the Fayyûm

The most striking feature of Middle Egypt is the great Oasis of the Fayyûm, which is connected with the Nile Valley and watered by a branch of the Nile, the Bahr Yûsuf Canal. The capital of the oasis, Medinet al-Fayyûm, is the episcopal see of the Coptic Orthodox Bishop of the Fayyûm. There are four Coptic Orthodox churches in Medinet al-Fayyûm. The Church of the Holy Virgin (1850), the Church of St. George, the Church of the Archangel (1800) and the

Church of Abû Saifain al-'Azab (1800). The Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to the Divine Wisdom (St. Sophia). The Franciscan Fathers maintain a Catholic Church in the town. There is also a Coptic Evangelical Church.

The Dair al-'Azab

The Dair al-'Azab is situated 6 kilometres south of Medinet al-Fayyûm. In following the road to Bani Suef, one passes through the village of al-'Azab, when one sees on the right hand the typical Coptic domes of the monastery.

> The Dair al-'Azab was probably founded by Peter, 12th century Bishop of the Fayyûm, or by the 13th century Patriarch Cyril III. We know for certain, that since the 18th century, no monks have inhabited the monastery. The old church situated in the south-eastern corner of the courtyard is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The Church has three haikals which are dedicated to St. Antony (north), the Virgin Mary (centre) and St. Michael (south). The new church, dedicated to St. Mercurius or Abû Saifain, is situated west of the old church. Below the south altar is the tomb of Anbâ Abrâm, the most popular Coptic Saint of the 19th and 20th century. Anbâ Yûsâb, Bishop of the Fayyûm, is buried under the north altar. The centre altar is dedicated to St. Mercurius. An annual mûlid, held from the 15th to the 22nd of August in commemoration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is attended by more than 4,000 pilgrims.

The Monastery of the Archangel Gabriel

The Monastery of the Archangel Gabriel is one of the oldest Coptic monasteries in the Fayyûm, and dates from the 7th or 8th century. In the history of the Fayyûm monasteries it is referred to as the Monastery of Naqlûn. Dair al-Malâk Ghobriâl is situated 13 km. south of Medinet al-Fayyûm, and can be reached by car following the asphalt road to Bani Suef up to the village of al-'Azab. At the end of the village, turn right and drive parallel to the Bahr al-Gharaq as far as the bridge (about 6 km.). Cross the bridge and follow the water pipe-line for another 4 km. through the

desert. The Monastery is situated on an elevation and can be seen from a distance.

The Church of St. Gabriel has three haikals, the central one is dedicated to the Archangel, the other two are dedicated to St. George and the Holy Virgin. Wooden screens with wicker design divide the church from the east to the west into four sections : the haikals, the choir, the section for the faithful and the narthex. Another wooden screen, also with a wicker design, separates the northern aisle, which is used as a gynaikion. In the nave there are six columns, three on either side, with Corinthian capitals. As pointed out by Johann Georg, the church is noteworthy because of the numerous Corinthian capitals, which have been built into the walls of the church. Thus, we find two capitals built into the fabric of the outside wall on either side of the entrance to the vestibule of the church ; three capitals are found above and on either side of the entrance leading from the vestibule to the church. Inside the church, capitals were built into the north wall of the nave, and into the southern section of the wall separating the choir. In the southern part of the apse there are two capitals, and in the centre of the apse there is inserted a stone with a cross surrounded by a band with an inscription. The design around the cross is made up of small crosses. Undoubtedly, these capitals belonged to the two former churches of SS. Michael and Gabriel.

The mandatum tank, which is sunk in the floor, is situated in the south-western part of the nave. The wooden ceiling is noteworthy for its paintings of geometrical designs. On some boards we find Coptic letters. The screens are adorned with the following icons : Jerusalem proskynitarion (beginning of the XIX century), the Holy Virgin enthroned with Child and two attending angels (18th century), the Archangel Michael (18th century), the Entombment of Christ (18th century) and the Entrance into Jerusalem (19th century). In addition, there are the following modern pictures : The Blessed Heart of the Virgin, the Archangel Gabriel, the Archangel Michael, the Good Shepherd, the Annunciation and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

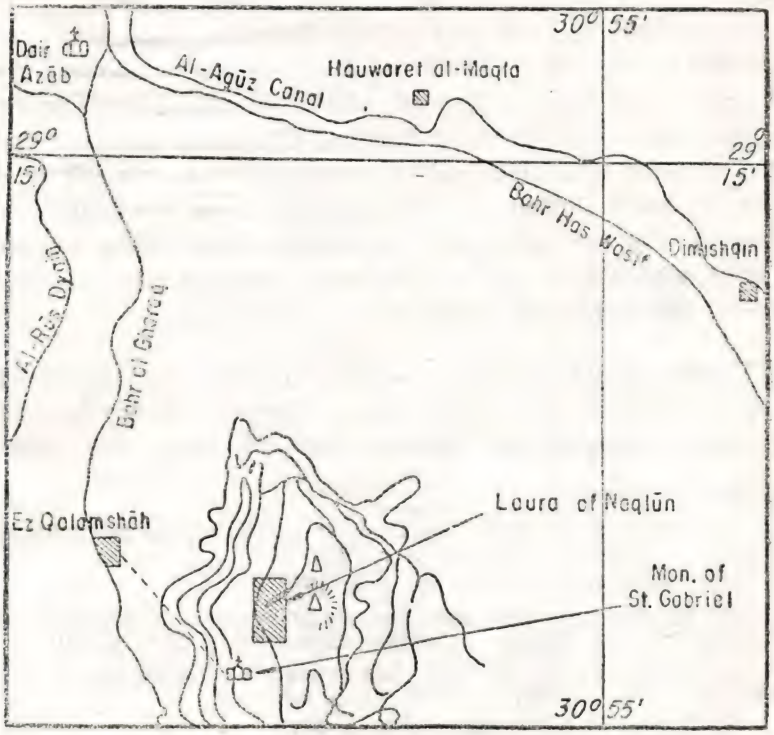
From the architectural evidence of the present church we may surmise that it was largely rebuilt and completely redecorated during the latter part of the 19th or the beginning of the 20th century, though with con-

struction material of the two former churches at Naqlûn.

The walls of the inner and outer courts of the ancient monastery are still discernible. Remains of the cells with their respective niches can be seen from the roof of the Church of St. Gabriel. The small houses in the south-western part of the monastery, and those inside the monastery south of the church as well as the small chalet west of the church are used by the pilgrims to the mûlid of St. Gabriel. The date of the construction of these houses ought to be assigned to the same period as the reconstruction of the church.

The Laura of Naqlûn

Our knowledge of the historical development of the monastic life in and around the Oasis of the Fayyûm is rather limited, especially if we should compare it with the rich history of such prominent monastic centres as Nitria, Cellia, Scetis or the Eastern Desert. And yet, there are sufficient data



available, which, if joined together, help us to establish a rough historical outline for our understanding of the Laura of Naqlûn.

By the middle of the 3rd century, Christianity was well established in the Fayyûm. Eusebius mentioned a Bishop Nepos of the Fayyûm, who in the first half of the 3rd century was well known for his millenarian interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. During the Diocletian persecution, the Christian community in the Fayyûm was as much affected as those Christians living in the other regions of Egypt, and the Synaxaria commemorate the names of several Fayyûm martyrs. Among these, there were two couples of Medinet al-Fayyûm, Theophilus and Patricia, (1) and Bartholomew and his wife. (2) With respect to the Laura of Naqlûn, we know of the name of at least one monk, who settled « in the mountain south of Fayyûm ». Abba Kâw, a monk of a cell near his native city of Bimâî, (3) suffered martyrdom during the Diocletian persecution. Compelled to worship the idols, Abba Kâw not only defied the order, but also broke the idol in two. He was tortured and taken to al-Bahnasa, and finally imprisoned at Ansanâ (Antinoë) where he was executed. Some five to eight hundred Christians suffered martyrdom with him. His body was translated to his cell at Bimâî, where a church was erected over it in his honour. (4) Another desert father of the Fayyûm was Abba Stephen Falâsî, who was known as a fighter « seeking after the manner of the saints who were in the desert ». (5)

After twenty years of anchoritic life, St. Antony the Great is said to have gone to the Fayyûm, where he made monks of many of the Christian brethren who were there,

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(1) Budge, E. A. W., *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church*. Cambridge, 1928, vol. I, p. 263.

(2) Budge, E. A. W., *op. cit.*, I, p. 167.

(3) Bimâî was not far from the city of Fayyûm, cf. Amélineau E., *La géographie de l'Egypte à l'époque Copte*. Paris, 1893, p. 101.

(4) Amélineau, E., *Les actes des martyrs de l'Eglise Copte*. Paris, 1890, pp. 69-71. Budge, E. A. W., II, p. 559.

(5) Budge, E. A. W., *op. cit.*, II, p. 563.

confirming them in the Law of God. (1) By the beginning of the 4th century, monasticism in the Fayyûm was as much developed as in the Nile Valley and in other centres.

The foundation of the Laura of Naqlûn is intimately connected with the fantastic Coptic story of Aûr or Aurâ, the illegitimate son of the queen's daughter and Abrâshît the magician. (2) Throughout this story, the Angel Gabriel appears as the guardian and guide of Aûr, who finally was led to the Mountain of Naqlûn, where he built a church in honour of St. Gabriel. Later, the small church of sun-dried bricks was replaced with a larger and more pretentious one of baked bricks, and the new church was consecrated by Abba Isaac, the Bishop of the Fayyûm, who also ordained Aûr to the priesthood. On the death of the bishop, the people of the Fayyûm requested the patriarch to consecrate Aûr to be their bishop. The request was granted, but Aûr returned to the Mountain of Naqlûn, building « habitations for large numbers of monks and cells for the brethren, and houses for the use of the people who went there on pilgrimage ». (3) The consecration of the Church of St. Gabriel in the Desert of the Fayyûm is commemorated by the Coptic and Ethiopian churches. (2) An unsupported statement by B. T. A. Evetts mentions that Bishop Aûr, the founder of the Naqlûn Monastery, lived in the beginning of the 4th century. (5)

Quite apart from the account of the Synaxaria and the Coptic legends, there exists archaeological evidence, which points to a Christian settlement at Naqlûn in the beginning

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(1) Synax., *Patr. Orient.*, XI, p. 663. Budge, E. A. W., *op. cit.*, II, p. 533

(2) The Coptic version of this story is translated by Budge, E. A. W., *Egyptian Tales and Romances*. London, 1931, pp. 12, 29, 247-263. The Arabic version is translated by Amélineau, E., *Contes et romans de l'Egypte Chrétienne*. Paris, 1888, vol. I, pp. 109-143.

(3) For a study on Aûr, cf. Abbott, Nabia, *The Monasteries of the Fayyûm*. Chicago, 1937, pp. 22-66.

(4) On the 26th of Ba'ûnah (Coptic) and the 26th of Sanè (Ethiopian).

(5) Evetts, B. T. A., *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and some neighbouring countries attributed to Abû Sâlih the Armenian*. Oxford, 189, p. 203, n. 3.

of the 4th century. The inscription of a funerary stele in the Church of St. Gabriel which was photographed and published by Johann Georg, Duke of Saxony, (1) was deciphered by Prof. Sprengling with the assistance of Mr. P. C. Costas and reads : « Christ Lord, grant rest to the soul of thy servant Christodorus. He fell asleep on the 25th of the month of Pharmuthi, 8th indication ». (2)

From the 4th to the 6th century, the Monastery of Naqlûn appears as the leading monastic centre in the Fayyûm, and it is into this period, therefore, that we must place the translation of the relics of Abba Kâw from his native city of Bimâî to the Monastery of Naqlûn.

With the emergence of the Monastery at al-Qalamûn (3) under the dynamic leadership of St. Samuel, the Monastery of Naqlûn was pushed gradually but steadily into the background. On the approach of Cyrus, St. Samuel, who had stayed for three and a half years at Naqlûn, persuaded the inhabitants of Naqlûn, being two hundred lay members and one hundred and twenty monks, to escape and to flee to the mountains. After the release of St. Samuel from his captivity by the Byzantines, he set about the establishment of his monastery at al-Qalamûn, and two years later, the group consisted of forty-one monks, fourteen of whom had come from the Monastery of Naqlûn. Thus, from the middle of the 7th century onwards, the Monastery of al-Qalamûn began to surpass the Monastery of Naqlûn in importance and position. (4) We know little about the history of the Monastery of Naqlûn after the time of St. Samuel. A document of the year 947 A.D. informs us that the monastery was the recipient of a fair-sized property located at Buljusuk and deeded to it as a gift by Tûsânâh, the daughter of Bisantî. (3). A

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(1) Johann Georg, *Neue Streifzuege durch die Kirchen und Kloster Aegyptiens*. Berlin, 1930, p. 19.

(2) This could be either 304-305 or 319 A.D., cf. Abbott, N., *op. cit.*, p. 50, n. 101.

(3) Meinardus, O., *op. cit.*, pp. 307-336.

(4) Abbott, N., *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

(5) Abbott, N., *op. cit.*, pp. 12-15.

further reference to this monastery is found in a letter written by a certain deacon Macrobius or Macarius, another deacon who seems to have been left alone at Naqlûn. (1) Abbott suggests that since the Monastery of Naqlûn was deserted except for Macrobius, and no reference to building or rebuilding is made in the letter, the document may well be assigned to the post-Hâkim period of restoration, *i.e.* the first part of the 11th century. (2)

Abû Sâlih's report speaks of two churches. « This monastery contains a church named after the Angel M.chael, in which there is a pillar of marble, (3) which sweats as if water were flowing from it, and it also possesses a large keep, which overlooks a mountain on which there is a boulder. Adjacent to the monastery there is a church named after the Angel Gabriel, enclosed by a wall, which was erected before the church was begun... It is said that the mountain called Naqlûn is that which contained the place where Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, enjoyed the shade, and worshipped; and sacrifices were offered to God in the days of Joseph, the son of Jacob, when Joseph superintended the building of the Fayyûm and the Hajar al-Lahûn ». (4) The Ethiopian Synaxarium informs us that « at the present day » the body of Abba Kâw is at the Monastery of Naqlûn. This means, that between the latter part of the 12th century and the beginning of the 15th century the Monastery of Naqlûn was not just one of several monasteries in the Fayyûm, but also contained the relics of one of the most foremost martyrs of the Oasis. (5) By the middle of the 15th century, however, the importance of the monastery had declined. Al-Maqrîzî omits any reference to the Church of St. Michael, and mere-

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(1) Crum, W. E., *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*. London, 1905, p. 281, No. 590. (This manuscript is undated).

(2) Abbott, N., *op. cit.*, p. 47.

(3) On my first visit to the Monastery of St. Gabriel (1962) I found several fragments of marble to the east of the present enclosure of the monastery.

(4) Abû Sâlih, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.

(5) Budge, E. A., *op. cit.*, II, p. 559.

ly speaks of the Monastery of al-Khashabah or the Monastery of the Angel Gabriel, which stands under a hollow in the mountain. « This hollow is known among them by the name of Jacob's shade. They state that Jacob, when he came to Egypt, sought shade within it. The water for this monastery is drawn from the canal of al-Manhî, and it lies below the Monastery of Sidmint. At the festival celebrated in this monastery, the Christians of the Fayyûm and other places assemble ».

On the 19th of August 1672 Johann Michael Wansleben visited the Fayyûm and found the Monastery of Naqlûn almost completely ruined, though its two churches (presumably SS. Michael and Gabriel) seem to have been still standing. One church, probably the Church of St. Michael, Wansleben could not enter, because the monks used it as a storage place for their provisions. The Church of St. Gabriel he describes as being very beautiful, all painted within with pictures of stories of the Holy Scriptures, and having the nave supported by slender columns of several stone drums each. (1)

The other travellers from the 17th to the 19th century did not mention the Monastery of Naqlûn. Somers Clarke in his survey of Coptic churches lists for the diocese of Fayyûm and Gizah the « Deir el-Melak ». (2). In the beginning of this century, probably during the episcopacy of Anbâ Abrâm of the Fayyûm, (3) the church was rebuilt and redecorated. The remains of the ancient wall paintings were covered with a coat of oil paint, and the wooden roof was restored. In the winter of 1927-1928 Johann Georg, Duke of Saxony, visited the Monastery of Naq'ûn, and provided us with the first account after the rebuilding of the church.

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(1) Vansier, J. M., *Nouvelle Relation en forme de journal d'un voyage fait en Egypte en 1672 et 1673.* Paris, 1677, pp. 274-275.

(2) Clarke, Somers, *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley.* Oxford, 1912, p. 205.

(3) For a biographical statement of this famous bishop, who died in 1914 and is buried in the new Church of St. Mercurius, Dair al-Azab, Fayyûm, cf. Leeder, S. H., *Modern Sons of the Pharaohs.* London, 1918.

« The entrance is through a donkey-stable, which to this day is being used as such. Thus one enters a very interesting church, belonging approximately to the 7th century. Noteworthy are the capitals in the nave and in the haikals, which give the appearance of being Corinthian. The lectern, which may date to the 12th century, is especially beautiful. Of interest also is the wooden ceiling ». (1)

To-day, (1971), the Church of St. Gabriel in the Monastery of Naqlûn is a regular parish church belonging to the diocese of the Fayyûm with the priest residing in Ez. Qalamshâh. Services are not regularly held. At the time of the annual mûlid in honour of St. Gabriel large numbers of Coptic pilgrims from the Fayyûm and Bani Suef assemble in the Monastery of Naqlûn and inhabit the many dwelling-places around the church, which were built for this purpose.

Whereas the monastic churches of SS. Michael and Gabriel are attested by manuscript evidence, there exists only one indirect reference to the existence of the Laura of Naqlûn. The story of Aûr contains a prophecy which throws some light upon the form of monastic life at Naqlûn. St. Gabriel addressing Aûr says : « Peace be to thee, O Aûr, friend of God ! I testify that I am pleased with thy noble work... But I say unto thee, this place is a desert, and those who come hither will wish for what is necessary to satisfy their needs. Send none away, neither rich nor poor... Many marvellous things shall be performed in this church, and its fame shall be noised abroad in all the countries of the earth... This mountain shall prosper, and shall become as crowded as a dovecot by reason of the immense multitudes of people who shall come to visit it from all countries of the earth, and their prayers shall mount up to God ».

The archaeological evidence points unquestionably to a laura, which consisted of a significant number of individual cells in the form of caves, south-east of the Monastery of Naqlûn. Whereas some monks lived within the walls of the

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(1) Johann, Georg, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

monastery, others inhabited the caves and visited the monastery only once a week for the Weekly Assembly and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The only traveller who noticed and also investigated these caves, was Wansleben. Apparently, the caves were not filled up with sand, for he did not mention any difficulties in entering the caves. « One sees on the mountain, which is behind the monastery on the south side and touching it, the ruins of an ancient small tower, which, the Copts say, was inhabited by the Patriarch Jacob, and it is for this reason, that its ruins are still called today Modsellet Jacob or the Tabernacle of Jacob. Going up a little on the same sandy mountain, one finds several caves, in which formerly hermits lived. I entered some to satisfy my curiosity. They are very small and there is nothing extraordinary in them.

« These caves are situated on the western slope and in the wâdîs of the north-western section of the Naqlûn mountain range. They are hewn out of a shaley limestone, and most of them are to be found just below the summit of the ridge. The openings of the majority of the caves face the west, though the openings of some of them face the south, and those hidden in the wâdîs have their openings towards the south-east. On the western slope alone I counted fourteen caves, of which, however, only twelve were clearly discernible. Except for three caves, all caves are filled to various degrees with sand. The extent of the area from the northernmost to the southernmost cave amounts to approximately 500 m. Four additional caves are situated on the slopes of the ridges, which run parallel to the main western ridge.

« By comparing the ground-plans of the caves of Naqlûn, we can distinguish three types. The walls of all caves are fully or partially covered with plaster. I did not discover any ancient graffiti or wall paintings.

« Type A : The unfinished caves, which probably represent the latest attempts of cave construction. Their ground plans vary depending on their stage of construction, but essentially they represent the first or the second stage of

hewing. The back walls of these caves are covered with a layer of plaster.

« Type B : The one-room cave with a northern extension, probably the sleeping room. The size of this room varies from 175 × 175 cm. to 250 × 250 cm. As in the case of the caves of type A, the walls are covered with a layer of plaster. Moreover, we find one or two niches in one or two of the side walls of the main room. These niches, which are a typical feature of the caves of Naqlûn, could have been used either for setting up an icon or for the storage of manuscripts. The niches have an average height of 70 cm. and a width at the base varying from 70 to 100 cm. Whereas the main room of these caves is normally filled with sand, the same does not pertain to the sleeping room, which has a height varying from 160-180 cm.

« Type C : The two-room cave with an outer and an inner room, both of which have one, two or three niches. The walls are plastered, and the size of the inner room varies between 12m3 and 20m3. The two rooms are separated by a natural wall, through which one or two openings lead from the outer to the inner room. As in the case of the caves of type B, the inner room has the ground plan of a square. Whereas the outer rooms are filled with sand, the inner rooms permit one to stand comfortably ».

The Monastery of al-Hammâm

The Dair al-Hammâm is by far the most picturesque monastery in the Fayyûm. It is beautifully situated in the desert on the edges of the Nile Valley. To reach the monastery, one is advised to follow the asphalt road from Medinet al-Fayyûm to Bani Suef up to the village of al-Lahûn. At al-Lahûn, one leaves the asphalt road and drives through the village towards the brick pyramid of al-Lahûn (Sesostris II), which one passes while travelling parallel to the edge of the fertile land through the desert. The distance from the village of al-Lahûn to the Dair al-Hammâm is about 8 km., of which five kilometres follow a desert track. The

monastery with its three white domes can be seen shortly after passing the brick-pyramid.

Flinders Petrie, who visited the monastery in the 19th century, wrote, « The deir has been rebuilt a few centuries ago, but there are outlines of a much larger deir showing on the ground. Outside the older deir are rubbish mounds. Here we found plenty of scraps of papyrus ». The monastery might have been built in the 8th century, though Johann Georg, Duke of Saxony, would place it into the 6th century. This is possibly the Monastery of St. Isaac, which Abû Sâlih (13th century) mentions, as being surrounded by a triple wall. Abû Sâlih refers to a beautiful Church of the Holy Virgin in the monastery. One enters the church through a large courtyard. The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary has two haikals. The centre one is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the southern one to St. George. The baptismal font is situated to the north of the centre haikal. Some of the icons in the Church are of recent date. The many potsherds which one finds around the monastery lead one to believe that at one time, the monastery was of considerable importance. Visitors are warned about the wasp nests which cover the eastern wall of the monastery. The monastery is occupied by a married priest and his family.

The Monastery of St. George

The Dair Mârî Girgis is the most recent of the Coptic monasteries in the Fayyûm region, and the Church of St. George and the cells attached to it were built in 1914. The dair is situated about 25 km. south of Medinet al-Fayyûm. In order to visit the monastery, it is advisable to travel to the village of Itsa, and from there to cross the desert strip of al-Na'alHn (5 km.) in the direction of Sidmant al-Gabal, which is situated on the Bahr Yûsuf Canal. From Sidmant, the visitor can take a rowing boat and sail in north-easterly direction to the church.

In the 13th, a Monastery of St. George was situated in Sidmant. In 1260, Butrus al-Sidmanti, a Coptic theologian of distinction, served as a monk in the Monastery of St. George. A monastery at Sidmant, dedicated to St. George is also mentioned by al-Maqrîzî. In the 15th century, the monastery was deserted.

The Dair Mârî Girgis was reestablished by two monks, Abûnâ Buqtur a.-Antûnî (d. 1937) and Abûnâ Mitîâs al-Antûnî (d. 1947). In the north-west corner of the nave there is a feretory with the relics of the founders. Thousands of pilgrims attend the annual mûlid at Dair Mârî Girgis, which is held a week prior to the Feast of the Ascension.

Lit. : Abbott, N., *The Monasteries of the Fayyûm.* Chicago, 1937.

Beadrell, H. J. L., *The Topography and Geology of the Fayyûm Region of Egypt.* Cairo, 1905.

Johann Georg, *Neue Streifzuege durch die Kirchen und Kloester Aegyptens.* Leipzig and Berlin, 1930.

The Dair Abû Lifa at Gebel Qatrani

In March 1936, Henri Munier and André Pochan visited the ruins of the Dair Abû Lîfa, which are situated two kilometres north-northwest of Qasr al-Sâgha, (1) on the south-eastern spur of the Qatrani Mountain Chain, approximately 13 km. north of Lake Qârûn. Their findings are set out under the title 'Le Deir Abou-Lifa' in the *Bulletin de l'Association des Amis de l'Art Copte,* III, 1937, pp. 1-5.

Among the seven Coptic inscriptions which they discovered at this monastery, there were two inscriptions with dates. Inscription II gives the date 402 A.M. or 686 A.D., inscription VII the date 575 A.M. or 858 A.D. (2) This means, that for the period of the 7th to 9th century, we have definite evidence of its occupancy by monks. Apart from this, the first reference to this monastery is found in a 15th century manuscript, which has been published by Ahmed Bey Kamal under the title *Le Livre des Perles Enfouies.* (3) For the treasure-seeker, the author gives the following directions : « When you go in the Fayyûm, direct your way to the Monastery of Abû Lîfâ, otherwise known as the Monastery of Abû Banûkh. This monastery, which is situated

(1) I regret to say that Munier's location of the ruins is incorrect.

(2) Cf. Munier, *op. cit.,* pp. 2 and 4.

(3) Cf. Ahmed Bey Kamal, *Le Livre des Perles Enfouies.* Cairo, 1907, p. 178.

above the first mountain of Abû Qatrân, is well known and cut in the rock. When you are there, leave it behind you and continue three miles in a westerly direction, *etc.* ». (1) There is no doubt that at the time of the writing of this guide for the discovery of treasures, the Monastery of Abû Lîfâ must still have been a prominent land-mark, which could be easily discerned from some distance. Only thus can we explain its mention in this guide. In the 17th century, the Monastery of Abû Lîfâ, though in ruins, was still well known to the inhabitants of the Fayyûm. Johann M. Wansleben, who visited Egypt in 1672, writes : « On the other side of this lake, there are deserts of sand of a very vast extent. I learned from people, who are worthy of trust and who had been there, that one would see there a number of very remarkable ruins of ancient cities, among these that of Temeh el Saba' or Temeh of the Lions... One still sees there also the ruins of an ancient monastery, known as Dair Abû Lîfâ ». (2) The ruins of Temeh were, of course, the ancient Hellenistic Soknopaiou Nêsos or Medinet Dimai.

It is not unlikely that the prominence of the Dair Abû Lîfâ in the memory of the people was, indeed, associated with certain treasures. Henri Munier mentions that Prof. Dr. Ahmed Fakhry of the Service des Antiquités in Middle Egypt had informed him of the curious legend concerning this locality which was told by the people of the Fayyûm, according to which the monks of the Fayyûm had hidden their wealth at the Dair Abû Lîfâ when they abandoned their monasteries. (3)

The references to this monastery by the archaeologists or geologists are very scarce. R.H. Brown, who studied the elevations and depressions between Qasr al-Sâgha and Di-

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(1) Abû Banûkh may be the Panoukhios who is mentioned by C. Wesseley, « Topographie des Faijum (Arsionoites Nomus) in griechischer Zeit », in *Denkschriften d. Akademie d. Wissensch., Wien*, L. 1904, p. 116. Abû Lîfâ means the « Father of the Palm Fibres ».

(2) Cf. Vansleb, J. M., *Nouvelle relation en forme de Journal d'un voyage fait en Egypte, 1672 et 1673*. Paris, 1677, p. 268.

(3) Cf. Munier, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

mai, makes no reference to the Dair Abû Lîfâ. (1) Some information, however, is supplied by G. Caton-Thompson and E.W. Gardner, who had their rest-house just below the ruins of the Dair Abû Lîfâ. « The Dair, a Coptic hermitage, cut in the face of a bluff in the great tertiary scarp was visited in 1926 by Mr. Starke in our company who climbed up to the chambers. According to the local Bedouins, the roofs in several places have collapsed within the past generation and crushed the rock-cut chambers. The Coptic inscriptions did not concern us, and we made no investigation of the place. The cliffs themselves seem to be devoid of prehistoric interest, but yield in places numerous Old Kingdom stone-tools ».(2) Kurt Bittel mentions the monastery briefly when he writes : « High above the Egyptian Temple (Qasr al-Sâgha) there are the ruins of the Coptic Monastery Dair Abû Lîfâ and the cave of a hermit, which are the last witnesses to a permanent settlement. Since these are vacated, however, only treasure-seeking and fertilizer-digging fellahín come to this site ».(3)

The only remains of the monastery are now two caves, which are cut into the rock. Either earthquakes or rain must have caused the collapse of the southern section of the monastery, entailing a considerable fall of rock, and leaving no more than the northernmost caves *in situ*.

The remaining part of the upper story of the monastery consists of a cave with altogether five rooms, the largest of which has in its southern part a round cistern with an outer diameter of 1.70 m. and a depth of 0.70 m. On either side, east and west, there is a round shaped room. North of the principal room, there is a small passage leading to two additional rooms, which have a height of 0.80 m. There were no traces of graffiti or wall paintings, although here

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(1) Cf. Brown, R. H. *The Fayum and Lake Moeris*. London, 1892, p. 52.

(2) Cf. Caton-Thompson, G. and Gardner, E. W., *The Desert Fathers*. London, 1934, Vol. I, p. 81, Vol. II, pl. LXXXVI, 6.

(3) Cf. Bittel, Kurt, «Kasr el Sagha», *Mittheilungen des Deutschen Instituts fuer Aegyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo*, V. 1934, p. 8.

and there one could still see small patches or plaster. There is no evidence that these caves had been used by the Bedouins.

The second cave can be reached from the foot of the mountain by climbing a sand dune which approaches almost to the entrance of the cave. Again, only the northernmost part of the cave is *in situ*. A passage, 0.46 m. wide, 0.70 m. high and 0.55 m. above the ground level of the cave leads from the northern wall of the cave towards the north. There were no traces of graffiti or wall paintings. Below the entrance to the cave, however, there were some potsherds of the 6th to the 10th century, which, undoubtedly, belonged to the monastery. From this cave, the ruins of Soknopaiou Nêsos are visible exactly to the south. There is good reason to believe that the last vestiges of the Dair Abû Lîfâ will eventually disappear as more and more of the mountain collapses.

The Ruins of the Monastery of the Archangel Michael at al-Hâmûlî

The ruins of the Monastery of the Archangel Michael are situated 3 km. south-west of the village of al-Hâmûlî in the desert. To visit this site from Cairo, one should proceed along the Fayyûm Desert Road to the oasis and then to the town of Ibshawâi. From Ibshawâi, travel in southerly direction via al-Nazla to al-Hâmûlî (19 km.). Here check with the authorities of the Community Centre. From al-Hâmûlî, proceed 3 km. south of al-Maqrânî, cross two canals and then turn westwards into the desert and proceed parallel to the edge of the desert for 4 km. in north-westerly direction. An elevation (3 metres high) can be seen from a distance. This mound marks the site of the ruined monastery. An area of 150 m. by 50 m. is covered wih potsherds and mud bricks and small fragments of pillars and socles. Numerous small pieces of plaster can be found, some of which show polychrome designs.

In 1910, a party of Bedouins, digging for *sabakh* (a kind of fertilizer obtained from ruins) discovered among

the ruins of the ancient monastery a library consisting of numerous Coptic manuscripts, known today as the Hâmûlî Manuscripts of the Pierpont Morgan Library. The copyists' notes, with which many of the Hâmûlî manuscripts terminate, inform us that they were either written for the Monastery of the Archangel Michael or transferred to it from some other Fayyûmic monastery. The dates which are given fall into the period between 823 and 914 A.D.

Lit. : *A Check List of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library.* New York, 1919.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES OF THE WESTERN DESERT

1. — THE MONASTERY OF ST. SAMUEL AT AL-QALAMUN

The Monastery of St. Samuel (Dair Anbâ Samwîl) at al-Qalamûn belongs, historically speaking, to the Fayyûm monastery group. The monastery is situated near the northern end of the Wâdî al-Mawâlîh, which is a continuation of the great depression comprising the Fayyûm Province and the Wâdî al-Rayân. It is built near two springs in the Wâdî al-Mawâlîh, 'Ain al-Samar and 'Ain al-Burdî.

The monastery can be reached either from Maghâgha or from the Fayyûm. From Maghâgha (177 km. south of Cairo), one travels in north-westerly direction for 14 km., until one reaches the Bahr Yûsuf Canal at al-'Idwa where one can easily cross the canal by car-ferry. From al-'Idwa, one continues through the Nile Valley to Bani 'Amir and al-Qaiyât. One enters the desert either at al-Qaiyât or at Shaikh Mas'ûd and travels in north-westerly direction passing the Mount Abû Tatûr and from there to the Mount of al-Harîth until one sees the mountain range of al-Qalamûn. The monastery is situated about 50 km. from al-Qaiyât. There are neither tracks nor roads beyond al-Qaiyât and it is essential to employ the services of a guide. One should use a jeep.

From the Fayyûm, one travels south-west to al-Gharaq al-Sultânî and enters the desert at Atrîsa. From there one

continues in southerly direction for 32 km. There are neither tracks nor roads beyond al-Gharaq al-Sultânî.

The difficulties in reaching this monastery make Dair Anbâ Samwîl the most isolated inhabited monastery. That this was not always so is seen from the comment of a 13th century writer who said : « This monastery is much visited ».

> The date of its foundation should be placed in the 4th or 5th century. The monastery was destroyed in the 9th century during the patriarchate of Shenute (859 A.D.). By the 12th century, the monastery had recovered, and we hear of large walls, flourishing gardens, twelve churches, and four large towers. At that time, the monastery was inhabited by 130 monks and it was considered as one of the important monastic institutions in Egypt. Yaqût al-Rumî mentions that the Dair al-Qalamûn is famous to the people and is well-known. By the 15th century, the monastery was on the decline, and by the 16th century it was abandoned. The Monastery of St. Samuel was reinhabited in 1898 by Abûnâ Ishaq al-Barâmûsî and ten monks who had left the Monasteries of the Wâdî al-Natrûn. Today, this monastery is the only inhabited monastery of the traditional monasteries of the Fayyûm which has survived.
>
> The monastery was visited by Belzoni and Cailliaud (1819), Wilkinson (1832), Schweinfurth (1886), Beadnell (1899) and Smolenski (1908).

The remains of the ancient monastery are still partly visible. The monastery must have covered an area of about twelve acres which was enclosed by a thick wall, the foundations of which are still recognizable, north of the present monastery. North-west of the monastery, the old wall appears to have had a width of eight metres, and was probably one of the keeps which are mentioned by the mediaeval writers. The large amount of fragments of glass and broken pottery leads one to believe that the number of monks who once inhabited the monastery was considerable. The two furnaces outside the monastery walls to the south must have been used for the manufacture of bricks. On the north-west side of the monastery, the foundations of several cells can still be identified, though most of the territory is covered with debris.

The Monastery of St. Samuel has three churches. The Catacomb Church of St. Samuel the New Church of St. Samuel and the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Catacomb Church is a subterranean sanctuary belonging to the 5th century.

> The church, which belongs to the oldest part of the present monastery, is situated in the qasr. The stone haikal-screen shows marks which indicate that once six icons decorated the church. Two steps lead up to the haikal, to the east end of which there stands a marble column, 1.25 m. high. At the time of the return of the monks, at the end of the 19th century, the Catacomb Church served at first as living quarters.

The New Church of St. Samuel is situated on the top story of the qasr.

> The church has one haikal and was built by Abûnâ Ishâq, about 1905. The stone haikal screen is decorated with icons of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Above the entrance to the haikal there is an icon of the Mystical Supper. Other icons in the church are those of St. Michael, St. George, the Ecce Homo, the Resurrection, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Samuel.
>
> The two feretories standing at the north wall of the church contain the relics of St. Samuel and St. Justus. There is a tradition which says that the relics of St. George were concealed in the monastery during the days of the persecution.

The new Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary with its nine domes was recently dedicated. The architectural design of the church was made by the monks of the monastery, of whom three were civil engineers.

The monastery measures about 60 m. (east-west) and 50 m. (north-south). The walls are between 5 m. and 7 m. high. Two gates lead into the court of the monastery. At the northern end of the east-wall is the gate which is used by visitors. The gate at the northern end of the west wall leads to the well outside the monastery. This well, 300 m. to the southwest, supplies the drinking water which, in spite of its salty flavour, has a pleasant taste. The well within the monastery walls is used for irrigation and washing purposes.

St. Samuel was born in 598 A.D. in the village of Pelkip and joined the ascetic life at al-Qalamûn at a very early age. From there he went to the Wâdî al-Natrûn, where under the care and supervision of St. Agathon he learned the angelic life. During his life time, the Coptic Christians underwent several severe persecutions by the Persians and the Byzantine authorities. Several times, St. Samuel took refuge in the Monastery of al-Qalamûn, where he had commenced his monastic life. His theological activities, especially his opposition to the decrees of Chalcedon called forth violent reactions from Cyrus, the patriarch-viceroy, who tried to impose the decrees of Chalcedon upon the monks. St. Samuel was imprisoned and beaten, and after severe questioning, was about to be publicly flogged when the civic authorities saved his life. After this, he took refuge in a certain church, where he was seized and carried away by the Berbers. He escaped, but was recaptured by his enemies who tried to force him to worship the sun, which he refused. Later on, he was tied to a young girl, and the two were left to guard the camels. But St. Samuel preserved his virginity. Set at liberty in return for the miraculous healing of his captor's wife he returned to the al-Qalamûn mountains, where he ended his days in peace. The Hermit of al-Qalamûn had lived fifty-seven years in his monastery and his powers of spiritual and administrative leadership earned for him a place among the monastic stars of the first magnitude.

The Cave of St. Samuel

Prior to the establishment of the first monastery in the region of al-Qalamûn, the monks lived in caves. These caves are to be found around the natural elevations in the Wâdî al-Mawâlîh and the Bahr Bila Mâ'. The most important cave in this area is the Cave of St. Samuel, situated about 4-5 km. east of the monastery in the Mountain of al-Qalamûn.

One travels to the foot of the Mountain of al-Qalamûn, and from there, climbs a sandy, very steep slope. The cave is situated at an altitude of about 180 m., some 15 m. below the mountain top of al-Qalamûn. The entrance to the cave faces towards the west, and the passage of the cave extends for some 30 m. into the rock. At the end of the passage is a water reservoir, which is

filled by the annual rain. The cave is completely plain and without decorations, except for a few Arabic graffiti.

According to tradition, St. Samuel used to live here during the last years of his life, visiting the monastery at intervals.

Lit. : Abbott, N., *The Monasteries of the Fayyûm.* Chicago, 1937.
Fakhry, A., *The Monastery of Kalamoun.* Cairo, 1947.
Giamberardini, G., « Il Convento dell'Anbâ Samû'îl e miracoli della Vergine, » *La Voce del Nilo,* XVIII, 5, 140-155.
Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts.* Cairo, 1961.
Simon, J., « Le Monastère copte de Samuel de Kalamon », *Orientalia Christiana Periodica,* I, 1935, 46 ff.
Smolenski, Th., « Le Couvent Copte de Saint Samuel à Galamoun, » *Service des Antiquités,* IX, 204-207.

2. — THE CAVES OF THE WADI RAYAN

In this chapter we hope to show that the ideal of the Egyptian anchoritic life not only had a distinguished past, but was also lived for a decade in our century. Following their reconciliation with the late Pope and Patriarch Cyril VI in May 1970, the hermits of the Wâdî Rayân established themselves in and around the Monastery of St. Macarius in Wâdî al-Natrûn.

Anchorite life in the 20th century is a rare phenomenon, both in the Orient and in the Occident. In Egypt, the anchoritic ideal was revived in the fifties of this century, when several monks from the Monastery of the Syrians (Dair al-Surîân) in Wâdî al-Natrûn withdrew from the monastery and, following the example of Abûnâ 'Abd al-Masîh al-Habashî, (1) settled around the Hill of Sarabamûn (2) and in the Wâdî al-Fâregh. (3) Otherwise, the anchorite life has dis-

(1) Abûnâ 'Abd al-Masîh al-Habashî inhabits a cave 4.5 km. west of the Daîr al-Barâmûs, where he has lived since 1935. After five days of continuous persistence, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn was accepted by Abûnâ 'Abd al-Masîh al-Habashi. He stayed with him for several months. Cf. Meinardus O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts,* Cairo, 1961, pp. 154-157. Also, Antûnîûs Yustus al-Barâmusî, *Dair as-Sayedah al-'Adhrâ al-Barâmûs,* Cairo n.d., p. 205 Hakim Amîn, *Dirâsat fi Târîkh al-Rabbaniyâ, etc.,* Cairo, n.d., p. 268.

(2) Meinardus O., *op. cit.,* p. 279.
(3) *Ibid.,* pp. 280-281.

appeared in Egypt, except for the hermits of Wâdî Rayân. In Palestine, there are four Greek Orthodox and two Ethiopian monks who uphold the anchorite life in the Wâdî Qilt, east of the Monastery of SS. John and George of Choziba, on the Mount of Temptation and in the Plain of Jericho. (1)

In a recently published article, (2) I have alluded to Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn and his group of anchoritic disciples, who since October 1960 have established themselves in the Wâdî Rayân, some 35 km., south-west of the Oasis of the Fayyûm. In this context, I have mentioned that « so far, this group of anchorites has prevented anyone from visiting them ». In fact, our arrival in the Wâdî Rayân on Wednesday, January 26, 1966, was the first visit of anyone not belonging to Abûnâ Mattâ's group. True, several times a year, Mr. Nabîl Fawzî, an engineer, who lives at the *Baît al-Takrîs li Khidmat al-Kirâzah,* drives with a jeep from Helwân via the Fayyûm to the 'Ain al-Rayân al-Bahriya to provide the hermits with those supplies which for one reason or another cannot be transported by camel, *e.g.* books and medicines, etc. On the other hand, the only means of communication between the hermits of Wâdî Rayân and the « world » is the monthly camel caravan from Gharaq al-Sultânî in the southern part of the Fayyûm, which provides the regular supply of food for the hermits. It is impossible to enter the Wâdî Rayân either by jeep or landrover, for a large sand dune closes the west entrance of the wâdî. Moreover, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin has instructed the camel drivers of the region to prevent any pilgrims and visitors from reaching the Wâdî Rayân.

On January 26, 1966, we flew with a De Havilland D.H.C. 3 (Otter) owned and operated by the Pan American Oil Company from Cairo (Embaba Airport) to the Wâdî Rayân, where we landed almost at the entrance to the cave of Abûna Isha'ia. We were greeted and welcomed by Abûnâ

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(1) Meinardus O., *Anchorètes modernes en Palestine,* in Revue *Biblique,* LXXIII (1966), pp. 119-127.

(2) Meinardus O., *Recent Developments in Egyptian Monasticism 1960-1964, in Oriens Christianus,* XLIX (1965), pp. 86-87.

Isha'ia and then taken to Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin, who led us to the cave-church of St. Michael. In the nave of the cave-church, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin spoke to us about the purpose and the history of the anchoritic fellowship. We were offered a very strong tasting tea (1) which was prepared by Abûnâ Irmîa (Jeremiah), and then visited the cave of Abûnâ Nihamîa (Nehemiah), where we met Abûnâ Mînâ. Altogether, we met seven hermits. (2) We then visited the garden and the well, and returned from there to the plane. In addition, I visited the cave of Abûnâ Isha'ia. All the monks whom we met conversed freely and fluently in the English language. They were uninhibited, and radiated a spirit of genuine joy and satisfaction at being hermits.

As in the case of most mountains, hills and wâdîs, the Wâdî Rayân has its particular mythological significance in the minds of the Bedouins. Thus, according to Abû 'Abd Allah ibn Muhammad al-Mukkarî, an Arab historian of the middle of the 14th century, Rayân is the name of the Pharaoh during the ministry of Joseph, (3) and Fakhry relates that the wâdî received its name from King Rayân, who supposedly is buried there with all his gold and jewels. (4) For that matter, to this day the Wâdî Rayân has attracted treasure hunters, and many stories are told about them.

During the Roman Era, the Wâdî Rayân was temporarily cultivated and inhabited, and the ruins of houses, tombs and a stone chapel near the 'Ain al-Rayân al-Wastâniya suggest that this settlement should be attributed tothe 1st and 2nd century (5).

The remains of brick buildings, whose inside walls were covered with a layer of plaster, east and south-east of 'Aîn

(1) The strong tasting tea is due to the high salt content of the water.

(2) Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin, Abûnâ Mûsâ, Abûnâ Mînâ, Abûnâ Ilisha', Abûnâ Irmîa, Abûnâ Iliâs, Abûnâ Ishaia'.

(3) Wilkinson, Sir Gardner, *Modern Egypt and Thebes*. London, 1843, vol. II, pp. 25-26.

(4) Fakhry, A., *Wadi el-Rayyan*, in *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Egypte*, XLVI (1947), p. 7.

(5) *Ibid.*

al-Rayân al-Wastaniya have sadly deteriorated since the visit of Fakhry in 1944. Already in 1820, G. Belzoni referred to the constructions near 'Aín al-Rayân al-Wastaniya. In addition, he mentions the remains of the foundation of a small Egyptian Temple, which served as a burial place for people of later ages. (1)

At the beginning of the reign of Muhammad 'Alî (1805-1848), a battle was fought in the Wâdî Rayân between the forces of 'Abdin Bey and Hassan Bey on the one hand and the Bedouins on the other hand. According to F. Cailliaud, the tombs of those who fell in this battle were erected on the site of those ruins, which extend towards the west. (2)

From the beginning of the 19th century onwards, the travellers to Egypt report of the Wâdî Rayân. In 1819, F. Cailliaud and Letorzec crossed the Wâdî Rayân, (3) in 1820, they were followed by G. Belzoni, (4) in 1824 by J.-J. Rifaud, (5) and in 1840 by Sir Gardner Wilkinson. (6) The geographical structure of the Wâdî Rayân was studied in 1886 by G.A. Schweinfurth, (7) while in 1900, G. Steindorff, (8) and in June 1942 and November 1944, Ahmad Fakhry visited the Wâdî Rayân in pursuit of their archaeological concerns. (9)

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(1) Belzoni G., *Voyage en Egypte et en Nubie.* Paris, 1821, vol. II, pp. 172-174.

(2) Cailliaud F., *Voyage à Méroé, au Fleuve Blanc au-delà de Fâzoal fait dans les années 1819, 1820, 1821 et 1822.* Paris 1826, vol. I, pp. 33-36.

(3) Cailliaud F., *loc. cit.*

(4) Belzoni G., *loc. cit.*

(5) Rifaud J.-J., *Tableau de l'Egypte.* Paris 1830, p. 292.

(6) Wilkinson G., *op. cit.*, II, p. 356.

(7) Schweinfurth G. A., *Reise in das Depressionsgebiet im Umkreise des Fajûm,* in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft fuer Erdkunde zu Berlin.* XXI, 2 (1886), pp. 115-123.

(8) Steindorff G., *Eine archaeologische Reise durch die Libysche Wueste zur Amonoase Siwe,* in *Pett. Mittheilungen,* L. (1904), pp. 186-187.

(9) Fakhry A., *loc. cit.*

The first geological studies of the Wâdî Rayân were carried out by Cope Whitehouse, who already in 1882 suggested the use of the depression as a water reservoir for the irrigation of large parts of the Western Desert. These studies were continued in 1886 by G.A. Liermur Bey and Sir C.C. Scott Moncrieff, (1) and later expanded by R.H. Brown, (2) H.J.L. Beadnell, (3) G. Caton-Thompson and E. W. Gardner, (4) A. Azadian and G. Hug, (5) William Willcocks, (6) G. Knetsch and M. Yallouse, (7) G.W. Murray, (8) O.H. Little, (9) C.S. Fox, (10) M. Baladi, (11) and F. Iskandar. (12) For the past eighty years, the Wâdî Rayân irrigation project has been discussed by the various governmental agencies. In March 1966, it was finally decided to include the Wâdî Rayân in the projects of the Ministry of Irrigation for its implementation in the Second Five-Year Development Plan. (13) Whether the execution of this plan

(1) Liermur G. A. and Scott Moncrieff C. C., *Notes on the Wadi Rayan*. Cairo 1888.

(2) Brown R.H., *The Fayûm and Lake Moeries*. London 1892, pp. 43, 48, 106.

(3) Beadnell H. J. L., *The Topography and Geology of the Fayoum Province of Egypt*. Cairo 1905, p. 22.

(4) Caton-Thompson and Gardner E.W., *The Desert Fayum* London 1934, pp. 9, 18.

(5) Azadian A. and Hug G., *Les Sources du Wady el-Rayan*, in *Bulletin de la Société Royale de Géographie d'Egypte*. XVII (1930), pp. 145-158.

(6) Willcocks William, *The Wady Rayan Reservoir and the Drainage of Egypt*. Cairo 1932.

(7) Knetsch G. and Yallouse M., *Remarks on the Origin of the Egyptian Oasis Depression*, in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Egypte*, XXVIII (1955), p. 22.

(8) Murray G. W., *The Water Beneath the Egyptian Western Desert*, in *Geographical Journal*, CXVIII (1952), p. 451.

(9) Little O. H., *Recent geological work in the Fayum and adjoining portion of the Nile Valley*, in *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte*, XVIII (1936), pp. 201-240.

(10) Fox C. S., *The geological aspects of the Wadi El-Rayan Project*. Cairo 1951.

(11) Baladi M., *Hydraulic studies for the Wadi Rayan project and the conservation of Nile Waters*. Cairo 1952 (in Arabic).

(12) Iskandar F., *Geological survey (Wadi el-Rayan) of the Gharaq el-Sultani-Sheet*. Rept. Standard Oil Co. Egypt (Arch. Nat. Research Center C-3), 1943.

(13) *Egyptian Gazette*, March 6, 9, 1966; *Journal d'Egypte*, March 6, 1966.

will directly affect the hermits of the Wâdî Rayân, is difficult to predict at this time. There is no question, however, that as the « world » penetrates the desert, the hermits have no alternative but to move further into the Inner Desert to preserve their way of solitude.

In the beginning of 1958, while living at the Monastery of St. Samuel (Dair Anbâ Samwîl, (1) Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin visited the Wâdî Rayân, where he stayed for one week, sleeping at night under a palm tree. One night, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin saw a vision. « Walking along the wâdî, I saw an old man sitting in front of the door of a cave, and as I approached the old man, he rejoiced, saying : 'I have waited here for thee for many years, come, come along'. And the old man arose and took my hand and said : I shall give unto thee this mountain'. Then, one of the fathers standing near me went to the old man and as he was about to touch him, the old man disappeared ». After a few days in the wâdî, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin returned to the Monastery of St. Samuel.

Then, in the autumn of 1960, just prior to the official suspension of Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin and his disciples by the Patriarch (2), he went again to the Wâdî Rayân. This time, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin and his disciples arrived in two jeeps at 'Aîn al-Rayân al-Bahariya, where they stayed for some time. While they were living near the well, some Bedouins approached them, asking them whether they were mere visitors or whether this was to be their fatherland. Then, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin remembered the vision and the charge of the old man, who had entrusted to him the wâdî. At first, the Bedouins mocked them; when they realized however, that Abûnâ Mattâ and his disciples Were determined to remain in the wâdî, they offered their help. One of the Bedouins said to Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin : « When I was

(1) Meinardus O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts*. Cairo 1961, pp. 307-336.

(2) The following monks of the Daîr al-Surîân were suspended : Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin, Abûna Mûsâ, Abûnâ Isha'ia, Abûnâ Kirillus, Abûnâ Istafânûs, Abûnâ Dîusînîûs. Cf. *Masr*, October 12, 1960, *Al-Ahram* October 7, 1960.

a youth, some forty years ago, I used to enter this wâdî to search and dig for treasures, and at that time, I discovered a cave which is fit for you ». Although afraid of being led astray, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin and his disciples departed from the well and went along with the Bedouins, and after a walk of almost two hours, they arrived at the cave. (1) The cave, however, was filled with sand. The same evening, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin and his disciples remained at this cave, being assured that it was the will and the design of God for them to live there.

After Easter 1961, realizing the difficulties of maintaining themselves in the desert, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin and his disciples returned to Helwân, where they stayed at the *Baît al-Takrîs li Khidmat al-Kirâzah* until the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin (August) 1962. In August 1962, Abûnâ Mattâ and six disciples returned to the Wâdî Rayân, where they resumed the anchoritic life in their former caves. (2) Except for relatively brief intermissions, when one or the other hermit returned to Cairo for medical treatment, the hermits have remained in the caves uninterruptedly since August 1962. In October 1964, Abûnâ Dîûnîsîûs returned to Wâdî al-Natrûn, first to the Monastery of St. Bishoi, subsequently to the Monastery of the Syrians. In the years 1964 and 1965, four new hermits were admitted by Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin, Abûnâ Irmiah, Abûnâ Ilîah, Abûnâ Nihamîa and Abûnâ Elisha'.

The hermits of Wâdî Rayân follow strictly the anchoritic pattern of the ascetic life as set forth by the Egyptian Desert Fathers of the 4th to the 6th century, and according to Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin, St. Macarius of Scetis is regarded as their prototype. Normally the hermits stay in their caves throughout the week, except for Saturday afternoon and Sunday, when they gather for the Weekly Assembly in the Cave-Church of St. Michael. In fact, the Weekly Assembly,

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(1) Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin, Abûnâ Mûsâ, Abûnâ Mînâ, Abûnâ Kirillus, Abûnâ Isha'ia, Abûnâ DIûnîsîûs, Abûnâ Daud and Abûnâ Istafânûs.

(2) Abûnâ Dâûd returned to Daîr al-Surîân.

which in the 5th and 6th century was an integral part of the monastic life at Nitria, Cellia and Scetis, is also considered as an important part of the life in the Wâdî Rayân. On Saturday afternoon at 3 p.m., the hermits assemble in the cave-church for the Canonical Hours which are followed by the Evening Offering of Incense. Afterwards, they return immediately to their caves. On Sunday morning at 5 a.m. in summer, and 6 a.m. in winter, they assemble again in the cave-church for the Canonical Hours, the Morning Offering of Incense and the Celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is normally celebrated by Abûnâ Mûsâ, though sometimes it is also celebrated by Abûnâ Mîna. (1) After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the hermits share in a common meal, which they eat in the nave of the cave-church. The meal is normally prepared by Abûnâ Nihamîa, who is assigned for the cooking. The fact that as in the days of old the Weekly Assembly meets in the nave of the cave-church suggests the religious character of the meeting and the semiritualistic nature of the meal, which at one time was known as the Agape.

The hermits of Wâdî Rayân maintain a high degree of individualistic piety. In fact, it is maintained that the hermits remain in their cells, lest the most ordinary sights and sounds of the world should distract them from their continuous pursuit of the « angelic life ». Thus, for example, Abûna Istafânûs has not left his cave for one year, except for attending the Divine Liturgy. During the week, some hermits cook their own food in their cells, using for fuel the wood which they collect in the wâdî. Other hermits, like the 6th century anchorites of Scetis and of the Laura of St. Gerasimos in the Plain of Jericho, abstain from cooked food throughout the week. The hermits normally eat twice a day, at noon and at 6 p.m. Water is the ordinary drink of the hermits, though sometimes, they do drink tea.

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(1) Three hermits are priests: Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn, Abûnâ Mûsâ and Abûnâ Mînâ. During the Lenten Season, the hermits do not leave their caves. Then, from the Eve of the Saturday of Lazarus to Good Friday, the hermits meet twice daily, from 8 a.m. to noon, and from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn is the spiritual head of the hermits, and he is referred to by his disciples as « our father ». He is regarded as being endowed with charismatic qualities ; moreover, he is the father confessor of all hermits. If he is ever absent, no one takes his place.

The hermits spend almost all of their time in contemplation and in copying spiritual texts. Thus, for example, all hermits have copied the spiritual writings of Isaac of Nineveh (Isaac Syrus), the Nestorian bishop of the latter part of the 6th century. (1) Several hermits have copied in Arabic the klimax Tou Paradeisou (Ladder of Paradise) by John Climacus (570-649), which treats of the monastic virtues and vices, and the complete « apatheia », which is upheld as the ideal of Christian perfection. Abûnâ Ishaia' has copied in English large portions of *The Early Fathers from the Philokalia,* of which there exists only one copy in the library. Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin has written numerous monographs, which were published by the Dair al-Suriân and the Baît al-Takrîs. Generally speaking, his writings reflect a strong mystical awareness as well as a decided nationalistic, almost patriotic character.

The hermits of the Wâdî Rayân are serious in their attempt to emulate the 4th to 6th century anchoritic life of the Egyptian deserts, which they consider central to the « Golden Age » of the Christian Church. Yet, there are as many distinct similarities as there are dissimilarities between the early Desert Fathers and their 20th century successors. Whereas in the 4th to 6th century, the majority of the Egyptian hermits belonged to the lower classes and were drawn from the fellâhîn, the hermits of Wâdî Rayân are exclusively university graduates. The early Egyptian hermits had little

(1) Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin acquired an Arabic *ms.* of Isaac of Nineveh from Abûnâ Mînâ al-Mutawahhid al-Barâmûsî, the present Pope and Patriarch Cyril VI. The writings of Isaac of Nineveh served as a spiritual guide to Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn. Subsequently, all of his disciples copied his writings. At one time, Isaac of Nineveh was a monk at Bethabe in Kurdistan, after a brief episcopate, he retired to a monastery at Rabban Shapur. Cf. Wensick A.J., *Mystical Treatises of Isaac of Nineveh translated,* Amsterdam 1923. Baumstark Anton, *Geschichte der Syrischen Literatur.* 1922, pp. 223-225.

or no education. Macarius the Great was a camel driver, Macarius of Alexandria was a small tradesman. Pambo and Paphnutius of Scetis were illiterate as were most of the monks of Nitria, and only those who were accustomed to hardship and privation were admitted to enter the inner desert. (1) In this context, it is interesting to note that those Desert Fathers who were either educated or belonged to the upper classes were foreigners, e.g. Albanius, Evagrius, Palladius, Arsenius and the two « Little Strangers », Maximus and Dometius.

At the Wâdî Rayân, the hermits are all professional men, which means that their major sacrifice consists in the surrender of their academic pursuits. Four of them are engineers, two of them are teachers ; there is a pharmacist, a chemist and a cotton merchant.

As in the early days of the Egyptian anchoritic life, as today, some hermits are more experienced in their pursuit of solitude than others. Thus, for example, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn, Abûnâ Mînâ and Abûnâ Istafânûs have inhabited for several years the caves of the Hill of Sarabamûn in the Wâdî al-Natrûn, (2) while Abûnâ Nihamîa and Abûnâ Ilisha' are novices who joined the group of hermits in November 1964. In the 5th and the 6th century in Scetis, any fully qualified father could bestow the habit upon a novice and so make a monk, though subsequently it was customary for the hegoumenos to admit or to reject a postulant. Macarius admitted the « Little Strangers », while Isaac of Scetis drove away a monk from Cellia who was too foppish in his garb. (3) At Wâdî Rayân, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin solely determines who is to be admitted or rejected. Several young engineers and teachers who are now staying at Baît al-Takrîs, have sought to be admitted to join the hermits of

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(1) Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Ed. W. Bright), Oxford 1878. IV, p. 23.

(2) Meinardus O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts*. Cairo 1961, p. 327.

(3) Evelyn White H. G., *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n-Natrûn*. New York 1932, vol. II, p. 191.

the Wâdî Rayân. However, so far, they have been told to wait and undergo more preparation.

The requirements for joining the anchoritic life at Wâdî Rayân are the same as those stipulated by the early Desert Fathers : Complete renunciation of the world, its pleasures and concerns, separation from the family, and renunciation of all property.

Regarding the monastic habit, the hermits do not wear a uniform garb, though all of them wear sandals and a black robe without a belt or a leathern girdle. On their heads, the hermits wear either a woolen cap or a *taiya*, the brown cap normally worn by the *fellâhîn*. Some of the hermits wear a cowl, which covers the head and neck.

It is noteworthy, that all hermits who have joined the group were given names of Old Testament patriarchs and prophets. Upon questioning Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn as to the reason for this practice, he said : « The Old Testament throws its illuminating rays upon the New Testament, and the New Testament can only be understood by a faithful reading of the Old Testament. The names are not given haphazardly, but according to the marks of the person's spirit and the marks of his heart, which are not easily seen by every man. Moreover, the name which is chosen will leave a powerful and lasting impression on the monk. When we determine which name shall be given to a monk, we all assemble and pray, and then we decide ».

In the course of our visit, I asked Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn whether he or any of his disciples ever cherished the idea of going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to visit the Holy Places. Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn replied : « Jerusalem the Holy is right here, in and around these caves. For what else is my cave, but the place where my Saviour Christ was born, what else is my cave, but the place where my Saviour Christ was taken to rest, what else is my cave, but the place from where He most gloriously rose again from the dead ? Jerusalem is here, right here, and all the spiritual riches of the Holy City are found in this Wâdî. There is the Holy Sepul-

chre, and over there is the Mount of Olives, and there, at the well, there is the water of the River Jordan ».

The anchorites of the Wâdî Rayân inhabit ten caves, which are hewn out of a shaley limestone, marl, on the northern slope of the Wâdi Rayân. The anchoritic settlement is divided by a reentrant into two groups of caves : the eastern group consisting of five caves and the western group of seven caves including the cave-church. The distance from the easternmost cave to the westernmost cave amounts to approximately 3 km., and though the distance between the respective caves varies considerably, on the average the caves are approximately 150 m. apart from each other. There are two basic types of caves, the one-room and the two-room cave, although there is no particular significance attached to the fact that some hermits occupy a one-room and others a two-room cave. At the same time, there are certain similarities of construction, which pertain to all caves. Thus, for example, all caves have a small « balcony » in front of the entrance. Moreover, the entrance and the windows of all caves face the south. In all instances, the stone bed is situated in the easternmost part of the cave. The height of the caves (also the cave-church), which are roofed by massive limestone, is approximately 1.90 m. All caves have wooden doors, which can be locked.

The largest cave, which measures about 11 m. × 6 m., is occupied by the Church of St. Michael. The cave-church can be divided into three parts, an apse, a nave and a narthex. Four steps lead down into the nave. On the north side of the nave, there is a stone bench with seating space for four people. East of the stone bench, there is a small library for the community. Approximately twenty volumes in Arabic and English, the Holy Scriptures and devotional books, are stored in a cupboard. An additional cupboard is unproportionally large. The stone altar is covered with a pinkish silk altar cloth, which is embroidered with four dark red crosses. The wooden altar slab was consecrated by Anbâ Banîâmîn, the late Bishop of Menufiyah. The chalice ark,

covered with a clean blue towel, and two candle-sticks stand upon the altar. A simple linen curtain separates the apse from the nave. The easternmost part of the apse is not completed. An artificial stone wall in the western part of the cave separates the nave from the narthex, which is used as a kitchen and a storage place. On the south wall, 1 m., south of the entrance, there is the bakery for the qurbân (Eucharistic loaf) and the bread. Next to it, there is a stove and a sink, with water piped in from a small outside tank. The northern part of this section is used as a storage place. A stone bench runs parallel to the north-west and west walls. The ceiling of this section was recently plastered. There is evidence that this particular cave was inhabited in the 6th and 7th century. (1) On the ceiling, near the entrance, there are some remains of old plaster, about 1 cm. thick. There is good reason to believe that from the 6th century onwards, monks either from the Monastery of St. Samuel (2) or from the Fayyûm monasteries (3) have withdrawn to the Wilderness of the Wâdî Rayân to live in complete solitude. For that matter, it is said that the father, Anbâ Samuel, the celebrated administrator of this monastery (4) used to worship on the mountain, at a place called Rayân, opposite to the monastery. (5). In the eastern part of Munqâr al-Rayân, Abûnâ Mûsâ discovered an ancient cave with numerous Coptic graffiti and crosses.

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(1) Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskin maintains that during the Lenten Fast, the Cave-church was inhabited by St. Macarius the Alexandrian. We know that St. Macarius had four cells, « one at Mount Nitria, one in Cellia, one at Scetis and one towards the south-west or in Alîbôn (?). Cf. Budge E. A. W., Palladius, *The Book of Paradise*. London 1904, vol. I, XVIII, p. 175. An Arabic edition of the « Lives of the Three Macarii » published at Daîr al-Surîân, April 1962, p. 157, gives the location of the four cells of St. Macarius as : One in Shiêt, one in Mount Nitria, one in Rayân, and in Barnûg.

(2) Meinardus O., *op. cit.*, pp. 307-336.

(3) Abbott, Nabia, *The Monasteries of the Fayyûm*. Chicago 1937, p. 40.

(4) *I.e.* the Monastery of St. Samuel at al-Qalamûn.

(5) Evetts B. T. A., *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and some neighbouring countries attributed to Abû Sâlih the Armenian*. Oxford 1895, p. 208. The monks of the Monastery of St. Samuel maintain that their Patron withdrew to the cave at Gebel Qalamûn. Cf. Meinardus O., *op. cit.*, pp. 332-334.

On the other hand, Ahmad Fakhry discovered in one of the ridges at the foot of the escarpment far from the edge of the cultivated plain, tombs which were coated with plaster. The most important among these tombs had the walls and the floor covered with a solid and fine plaster, which is still well preserved. The principal tomb, which was filled with driftsand, contained pottery and glass of the Roman period. The main tomb is now used as the cave-church of St. Michael, and probably the hermits made use also of the other ancient tombs in the construction of their cells.

For our understanding of the caves of the early anchorites in Egypt, the experiment of the Wâdî Rayân is of great importance, especially in view of the fact that we have no descriptions of any ancient cells, and the casual allusions suffice to form only a very general picture of them. As it used to be in Scetis and elsewhere, so here in the Wâdî Rayân the cells are wholly or partially contrived in the limestone or sandstone. The interior is partially or fully plastered with mud, and each cell has either one or two windows, which in the Wâdî Rayân are fitted with screens, for every summer the depression of the Wâdî Rayân attracts many mosquitoes. Cupboards provide space for books and writing utensils. As to their furniture, the hermits have a table, a chair, several straw mats, a stone jar for water, and some cooking utensils.

The garden at Wâdî Rayân is situated around 'Aîn al-Rayân al-Wastaniyah, about one kilometre south-east of the cave-church. The garden, which was once destroyed (1961) by the Bedouins, is now enclosed by a fence made of palm branches « in order to keep out the gazelles ». The entrance to the garden is from the east. Since their return in 1962, the hermits have reinforced the artesian well with concrete. At first, it was planned to pipe the water to the escarpment where the caves are situated approximately 30 m. above the level of the well. Later the project was abandoned. Some cast iron pipes are still stored in the cave of Abûnâ Nihamîa.

The hermits have planted several kinds of vegetables in their garden, e.g. tomatoes, gargîr, mulukhia, khubaîza, sabânikh, carrots, radishes and some small date palms. The garden is tended by the hermits on a rotating basis. The well and the water supply are the responsibility of Abûnâ Ilisha', who, with the help of a donkey, carries the water from the well to the cave-church.

The Wâdî Rayân is covered with marine fossils, sea shells and nummulites. Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn, commenting on these fossils, felt that this was sufficient evidence that the Deluge (Genesis VII) had extended to Egypt. The caravan track, which leads through the wâdî, is occasionally used by camel caravans from Gharaq al-Sultanî (Fayyûm), to the Oasis of Bahria. Moreover, salt diggers have been seen in the Wâdî Rayân.

3.—THE CHRISTIAN REMAINS IN KHARGA OASIS

The Christian Necropolis of al-Bagawât

The Christian necropolis of al-Bagawât is situated in the eastern part of Kharga Oasis, on the slopes of Gabal al-Tair, about 1 1/2 km. from the Persian Temple of Hibis. The student who is interested in Christian antiquities should not fail to visit the oasis which is now easily accessible by car. Leaving Asyût, one travels on the main road north for 17 km. and then turns westwards following the new asphalt road which leads to the oasis. The distance from Asyût to al-Bagawât is 223 km. The Christian necropolis is situated on the right hand of the road before entering the oasis.

A Historical Note

The necropolis of al-Bagawât covers an area of about 500 metres in length and 200 metres in breadth. The main entrance to the necropolis was at the south side, in the direction of the town. The church of the necropolis occupies a

central place. There are altogether 263 chapels, which have been allocated in eight groups. Descriptions of the site can be found in the accounts of the following 19th and 20th century travellers and archaeologists: Cailliaud (1821), Edmonsone (1822), Hoskins (1837), Wilkinson (1835), Schweinfurth (1875), De Bock (1901), Lythgoe (1908), Hauser (1932) and Fakhry (1951).

The necropolis of al-Bagawât was used as a burial site prior to the introduction of Christianity into the oasis. Consequently, there are chapels at al-Bagawât, which can belong to the pre-Christian and the Christian era. Only the remains of decorations, architecture, etc. will enlighten us, whether the chapels belonged to the Christian or to the pre-Christian era. Moreover, one can safely distinguish some types, which are older than others. It is generally assumed that none of the existing chapels is older than the beginning of the 4th century. The necropolis was probably deserted by the 7th century. None of the numerous Arabic graffiti goes back to a date earlier than the 9th century, and many of the Arabic graffiti, no doubt, were scratched into the walls of the chapels by people travelling with caravans along the famous route of the Darb al-Arba'în.

Archaeological discoveries confirm that Christianity was introduced in Kharga in the latter half of the 3rd or in the beginning of the 4th century. There is no doubt, that large sections of the population accepted the Christian faith. A Christian bishop of Kharga resided in the oasis till the 14th century.

From ancient times onwards, the oasis served as a place for banishment. Some of the great Christian theologians of the 4th and 5th centuries like St. Athanasius and Nestorius were banished to Kharga, where they lived for many years.

The Chapel of the Exodus

Of the 263 chapels at al-Bagawât, all of which were built of sun-dried bricks, the visitor ought to take special

note of two chapels in which the wall paintings are still preserved. The chapels are locked, but the key can be obtained from the watchman.

The Chapel of the Exodus is situated behind the group of chapels which occupies the central ridge in the northern part of the necropolis.

> The chapel belongs to the oldest type, and can be considered as one of the earliest chapels in the necropolis. Its paintings may be attributed to the first half of the 4th century. The Chapel of the Exodus is unique in the necropolis insofar as the whole interior is painted with different scenes from the Old Testament and a few scenes referring to Christian subjects. The largest and most important among the wall paintings is a detailed representation of the Exodus, which fills the whole circle. The scenes can be described in the following order : The Exodus, the Ark of Noah, Adam and Eve, Daniel in the Lion's Den, the Three Holy Children in the Fire, Abraham's Sacrifice, Jonah thrown to the whale and the whale swallowing Jonah, the whale rejecting Jonah, Rebecca at the well and the slaves of Abraham reaching the well, Job seated on a chair, and Job's suffering, Susanna, Jeremiah in front of the Temple of Jerusalem, the Sacrifice of Abraham, and Sarah in prayer, the Shepherd, the Martyrdom of St. Thecla, the Seven Virgins, a garden and some later additions.

The Chapel of Peace

The Chapel of Peace is situated near the entrance to the necropolis on the western slope. The chapel stands by itself and is generally known as the Byzantine Tomb. The walls of the chapel are covered with Coptic, Greek and Arabic graffiti.

> The paintings in this chapel are of pure Byzantine style and the subjects which are represented are those found in the catacombs in Rome and in many early churches in Egypt and elsewhere. There is one typical Egyptian subject in this chapel, the representation of SS. Paul and Thecla, who seem to have been popular saints in Kharga. The wall paintings may be attributed to the 5th and 6th century. The paintings represent the following themes : Adam and Eve. Abraham about to sacri-

fice Isaac and Sarah standing by, to the left of this theme is Irene (Peace), a woman holding the crux ansata in her right hand and a sceptre in her left. Daniel in the Lions' Den. Dikaiosyne (Justice) is represented by a woman who wears a purple dress and holds a balance in her right hand and a cornucopia in the other hand. Euche (Prayer) is a woman wrapped in clothes, raising both hands in prayer. Jacob is a small figure between Euche and the Ark of Noah. The latter is decorated with two Corinthian columns. The Annunciation shows the Holy Virgin in prayer while a dove descends. SS. Paul and Thecla sit facing each other. This scene is almost over the entrance to the tomb.

In five other chapels are still a few remains of paintings, *e.g.* the theme SS. Paul and Thecla, the Sacrifice of Abraham, the Phoenix, and others.

The Church

The Church of the Necropolis is built at the northern edge and commands a magnificent view. It is the largest building, and is situated in the middle of the cemetery. The structure is well preserved and its walls are about 6 metres high. The entrance is at the south-west corner. The church is divided into three sections which are separated by colonnades of columns. The church may be assigned to the 5th century, and thus it can be considered as one of the most ancient churches of Egypt.

Besides the Necropolis of al-Bagawât, there are two other Christian sites in Kharga. The walls of the Dair Ghanaim are covered with many Christian texts, and on the summit of one of the hills of Gabal al-Tair there lived some hermits as seen by the Coptic texts on the walls.

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Brugsch, H., *Reise nach der grossen Oase el-Khargeh.* 1878.
Cailliaud, M. F., *Voyage à l'oasis de Thèbes.* 1821.
De Bock, W., *Matériaux pour servir à l'Archéologie de l'Egypte Chrétienne.* 1901.
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Edmonstone, A., *A Journey to two of the Oases of Upper Egypt.* 1822.

Hoskins, G. A., *Visit to the great oasis of the Libyan desert.* 1837.
Letronne, M., *Recueil des inscriptions grecques et latines.* 1842.
Naumann, R., «Bauwerke der Oase Khargeh ». *MDIK,* VIII, 1939, 1-16.
Rivet, L., « Voyage aux Oasis de Kharget et de Dakhleh 10-14 Mars 1954 ». *Cahiers d'histoire égyptienne,* VII, iv, 1955, 244-278.
Sauneron, S., « Quelques Sanctuaires Egyptiens des Oasis de Dakhleh et de Kharget », *Cahiers d'histoire égyptienne,* VII, 1955, 279-299.
Schweinfurth, G., « Notizen zur Kenntnis der Oase El-Chargeh », *Petermann's Geogr. Mitt.,* 1875.
Wilkinson, G., *Modern Egypt and Thebes.* 1842.

The Monastery of Mustapha Kachef

The Monastery of Mustafa Kachef is situated 2 km. west of the Christian Necropolis of al-Bagawât. The monastery can be easily reached by walking across the sand dunes. According to tradition, the monastery owes its name to a certain Governor Mustapha who served during the Mameluke period in Kharga Oasis.

The monastery apparently had three floors. That this building was used by Christians is evident from the remains of a church of which the apse is still visible. Moreover, one can still see the ruins of several cells, which were constructed around the tomb of a hermit or a local saint. Inscriptions in the cells, probably just names, may belong to the 5th or 6th century. Clearly visible are four construction periods, though it is difficult to establish their respective dates.

The site was studied by W. Müller-Wiener of the German Archaeological Institute, Cairo.

Lit. : De Bock, W., *Matériaux pour servir à l'Archéologie de l'Eglise Chrétienne,* St. Petersbourg, 1901.

The Church in the Temple of Hibis

In the vicinity of the Christian Necropolis of al-Bagawât is situated the Temple of Hibis, which was built by Darius I (521 B.C.) and added to by Darius II, and restored by Nektanebes (378-360 B.C.). This is the only Persian Temple in Egypt.

On the north side the temple is almost hidden by thick groves of palm-trees, and close by it ran a clear stream of water, on the south is a large depression, which probably occupied the site once held by a sacred lake.

Soon after the abandonment of the Temple of Hibis by the pagan priests, a Christian church was erected against the north side of the portico. The south side of the church was the portico. Wherever new walls, however, were required, they were built of stones from the girdle wall or decorated stones from the Ptolemaic building to the north. The centre of the east side of the church served as the sanctuary, which was elevated.

Of the many inscriptions found on the walls of the temple, only two refer to the church.

The church was probably built in the first part of the 4th century. Its destruction may well have coincided with the invasion of the Blemmyes in 450 A.D., who sacked Hibis and carried away large numbers of prisoners including Nestorius.

Yet, there is an inscription at Gabal al-Tair which begins : « In the year of Diocletian 500 and, I, Severus, the son of the Pagarch Hibis ». From this it may be argued that some part of the city was still in existence between 784 and 883 A.D.

Lit. : Winlock, . E., *The Temple of Hibis in Khargeh Oasis.* Egyptian Expedition Publication, Vol. XIII, 1941.

The Ruins of al-Dair

The ruins of al-Dair at Gabal Umm al-Ghanaim are situated 26 km. south-east of the Christian necropolis of al-Bagawât and 2 km. north of Gabal Umm al-Ghanaim on the caravan route from Kharga Oasis to Girga.

The ruins, which have the appearance of a desert monastery, are more likely to be the remains of a fortress or a storage place for grain than those of a monastery. Yet, it is significant to note that the ruins are referred to by the Arabs as « al-Dair ». The remains indicate a large square building. The walls, which are 4 metres high, are construct-

ed of burnt bricks. There are twelve towers with a diameter of 5 metres built into the walls. The original entrance was situated in the western wall ; this part, however, is completely ruined. The building has a length of 59 metres and a width of 59 metres. The site of the construction is marked by some vegetation.

To the east of the building, there is a large necropolis. One kilometre west-north-west are the ruins of a Christian church. There are, however, no inscriptions which could help us in its identification.

Lit. : De Bock, W., *Matériaux pour servir à l'Archéologie de l'Eglise Chrétienne*. St. Petersbourg, 1901.

Schweinfurth, G., « Notizen zur Kenntnis der Oase El-Chargeh », *Petermann's Geogr. Mitteilungen*, 1975, 389 ff.

4. — THE CHRISTIAN REMAINS IN DAKHLA OASIS

Dakhla Oasis or the Inner Oasis is situated 120 km. west of Kharga Oasis and 300 km. west of Armant. Like Kharga Oasis, Dakhla was inhabited by Christians, as one can see from the few remains which have survived the complete obliteration. At one time, Dakhla was part of the Oasis Magna of the Romans.

The Ruins of Dair al-Hâgar

Travelling from Mût, the capital of Dakhla Oasis, in north-westerly direction to Dair al-Hâgar, one passes the ruins of Dair Abâ 'Uthman (Quzmân ?), which are situated on a hill covered with black and red potsherds. The rectangular base of the construction is still visible, though it is impossible to recognize any subdivisions. There is good reason to believe that this may have been a church (?), for in the eastern part of the ruins are the remains of an apse. Around the church, towards the north, east and west, one can still see the ruins of some walls, which may indicate that the church may have been part of a larger structure, perhaps a monastery.

North of Mût, there is situated the Temple of Dair al-Hâgar, which is the most interesting archaeological site of the oasis. The temple was studied by Rohlfs in 1874. The temple is enclosed by a crude brick wall, and between the entrance and the temple-court are the remains of a basilica with three naves. Six socles in the central nave are still discernible.

North-east of Mût is the village of Smint, east of which there is Smint al-Khareb. Here, Hardwig King saw some mud-brick ruins, some of which had paintings on their interior walls, apparently of Coptic origin.

In Mût, among the tombs, there are numerous ruins. One of the stones clearly shows a crow and several letters. It is said that this stone belonged to a church, though it is impossible to determine where this church may have been situated.

Lit. : King, Hardwig, *Mysteries of the Libyan Desert.* London, 1925.
Vollbach-Krause, *MDAIK*, XIX.
Wilkinson, I. G., *Handbook for Travellers in Egypt.* London, 1867.

5. — THE CHRISTIAN REMAINS IN BAHRIA OASIS

The Church of St. George at al-Haiz

The small Oasis of al-Haiz is situated 47 km. south-west of the village of al-Bawîtî in the Oasis of Bahria. The oasis can be reached by camel from the Fayyûm in 5½ days or from Bahnasa in 4 days. Nowadays, the oasis can be reached by jeep in one day (about 360 km.). Coming from Cairo, follow the Fayyûm road. After 3 km. on the Fayyûm road, turn to the right into the desert, and follow a track marked by black oil-drums. A guide is advisable. From Bawîtî, the track to al-Haiz is marked with kilometre markers. The main villages of the oasis are al-Qasr al-Bawîtî. A Government Rest-house (10 beds) is available. Desert permits from the Frontier Police are required.

Al-Haiz has always been an important station for the caravans between Bahria and Farafra. The Church of St. George is situated south-east of al-Haiz.

Ahmad Fakhry, who in 1945 excavated the ruins, places the church between the 4th and 5th centuries. In many ways, this church can be compared with the Basilica of Denderah, which is one of the oldest churches in the Nile Valley.

The Church of St. George is mentioned by Abû Sâlih in the 3rd century as the place where the relics of St. George, except his head, were contained. During the reign of al-Hafiz, the body of St. George disappeared, later returned. The first travellers who mentioned the church between 1818 and 1819 were Belzoni and Cailliaud who still saw the walls decorated with paintings.

The church is of the basilican type with two entrances. The south entrance led to the church, while the entrance at the north-west corner led first to the baptistery. The ceiling has fallen down and the upper parts of the walls are destroyed.

The Ruins of the Monastery at al-Rîs

The ruins of the monastery at al-Rîs are situated about 500 metres south of the ruins of the Church of St. George at al-Haiz. Two sections of mud-brick walls are still visible, the extension of which indicates that the site was occupied by a large building. The ruins are surrounded by many foundation-walls, which are clearly discernible and which indicate a settlement of some importance. The ruins are situated 1 km. north of al-Rîs.

The Coptic Ruins of Qasr Muhârib

The ruins of Qasr Muhârib are situated 10 1/2 km. east of Bawîtî (Bahria) or 4 1/2 km. east of Mandîsha. The ruins consist of the remains of a church and nearby, towards the west, the remains of several aqueducts. North of the ruins of the church there are traces of a former village and a former cultivation.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES OF THE EASTERN DESERT

1. — THE MONASTERY OF ST. ANTONY AT MOUNT CLYSMA

Since the completion of the construction of the Suez-Râs Ghârib road in 1946 by the Shell Company, the accessibility of the Monastery of St. Antony (Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs) has been greatly increased. Any motorist with ample water and gasoline supply can drive the 334 km. from Cairo to the monastery within five to six hours. The geographical isolation of the monastery has ceased to be a stumbling block to the visitor and tourist. As R. Fedden asserts with so much pertinence : « It is set down now on the fringe of the lay and the unascetic, a few gallon's worth of petrol separate it from golf-courses and maisons de coiffure. Each year the silence around the monastery is more broken, and inevitably each succeeding traveller is of less importance ».

The days of the early travellers who ventured by faith and enthusiasm have passed. The « world » is in the process of penetrating into the remotest corners of the world. The camel caravan has been replaced by jeeps and trucks, and the day will not be far distant, when helicopters or planes will disturb the peace and the quietness of the air, which surrounds the place.

On January 6, 1955, Captain W. F. Judd of TWA introduced this possibility by landing with a Cessna 170 at St. Antony's.

One reaches the monastery from Cairo via Suez along the Red Sea road to the lighthouse of Za'faranah (289 km.). On reaching Za'faranah it may be advisable to inform the Frontier Corps of one's trip to the monastery. Since the monastery is without direct mail-service, it is always greatly appreciated by the monks if visitors act as messengers or mail carriers between the monastery and the « world », in this case the lighthouse of Za'faranah with its recently established post-office. From Za'faranah one travels in a westerly direction along the new desert-road. The road leads through the Wâdî 'Arabah, one of the least arid valleys in the Eastern desert, which is located between the North and South Qalâlah mountain ranges. After 30 kms., a sign with the name of the monastery in English and Arabic points to the direction of the monastery. Another 15 km. of desert-road in a south-westerly direction, and the monastery with the top of its palm-trees and bell-towers showing above its walls comes into sight.

In order to avoid unnecessary delay and to ensure a gracious welcome, it is advisable to obtain a letter of introduction from the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo. This is not to say that without a letter the visitor will not be permitted to enter. Many thefts and robberies, however, have caused the monks to be extremely cautious.

A monastic settlement was established in the reign of Julian the Apostate, that is between 361 and 363 A.D. A few years after the death of St. Antony, his followers settled and organized themselves, where their master had lived and died. The original settlement included merely the most necessary buildings, providing the monks with a place for worship, a place for solitude, perhaps a kitchen and a bakehouse. The monks used to live in solitary cells, yet within walking distance to a communal worship centre, where the Divine Liturgy was celebrated and where the monks took part in a common meal.

The Monastery of St. Antony served as a place of refuge for some monks of the Wâdî al-Natrûn while they underwent several sacks during the fifth century, and we know that St. John the Short escaped to the Red Sea.

In the 7th century, the Monastery of St. Antony was occupied by Melkite monks, for St. John the Almoner, Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria (609-620 A.D.), supplied a certain Anastasius, hegoumenos of St. Antony's Monastery, with large sums of money and ordered him to buy up captives taken by the Persians. This was in the latter half of 615 A.D.

The Melkite occupation lasted until the 8th century. Around 790 A.D. some Coptic monks disguised as Bedouins entered the monastery to steal the bodily remains of St. John the Short of the Wâdî al-Natrûn, who had found shelter at St. Antony's sometime in the fifth century, and who had died there.

If the Monastery of St. Antony underwent the same or a similar fate as that of the monasteries in the Desert of Scetis in the 8th or 9th century, is difficult to know. During the patriarchate of Khâîl I (743-767 A.D.) Arab tribes moved around in the mountains of the eastern part of Egypt from Bilbais to al-Qulzum and the Red Sea, and there were among them more than thirty-thousand horsemen.

During disturbance in the 11th century, the Monasteries of St. Antony and St. Paul were badly damaged and many of the monks lost their lives. The extent of the devastation is not known to us. About one hundred years later, the Monastery of St. Antony was restored and was in Coptic hands.

During the patriarchate of Yuannis VI (1189-1216), the monastery was inhabited by Coptic monks and even supplied candidates for the Ethiopian Abunate.

Abû Sâlih, (13th century) says : « This monastery is surrounded by a fortified wall. It contains many monks. Within the wall there is a large garden, containing fruitful palm trees, and apple trees, and pear trees, and pomegranates, and other trees besides beds of vegetables, and three springs of perpetually flowing water, with which the garden is irrigated and which the monks drink... ».

It is possible that the monastery was included among the many renovation projects that were executed by the Coptic Church during the 12th and 13th century. The wall paintings in the Church of St. Antony belong to the 13th century being the work of the sons of Ghalîb (1232-1233).

The monastery was visited or described by the following 14th and 15th century pilgrims: Ludolph of Suchem (14th cent.), Niccolo di Poggibonsi (1346), Ogier VIII (1395), Ghillebert de Lannoy (1421), Dettlof Heinkel (1436).

At the Council of Florence from 1438-1445 the Coptic Church was represented by a delegate from the « celebrated Monastery of St. Antony ». John was hegoumenos of the monastery, when he was chosen to represent his church. He travelled to Florence, but arrived late and the Greek delegates had already departed. Still a decree was issued for the reunion of the Copts with the other churches. The desert father from Mount Clysma signed the Act of Union (uniting Latins, Greeks and Copts) which for a few days, at least, united the whole of Christendom.

In the latter part of the 15th century the monastery and its library were destroyed by the Bedouins who lived in the monastery as servants of the monks. One night, the Bedouins, desiring to become the masters of the monastery, indiscriminately killed all monks, and took possession of the monastery. The smoke stains in the Church of St. Antony still remain as a solemn reminder of this desolation. For it was in the old church, the Church of St. Antony, that they established their kitchen, lighting their fires with the ancient scrolls and documents of the Antonian library.

J. Thénaud, who visited the Monastery of St. Catherine in 1512, states that at a distance of four days from there is situated the Monastery of St. Antony which is occupied by Syrian monks, and that the monastery was destroyed and its monks had been killed some seven years before.

In the history of the Monastery of the Syrians we read that Patriarch Gabriel VII (1525-1568) assisted in the rebuilding of the monastery. At that time, 63 monks inhabited Dair al-Surîân, and of these 20 were sent to Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs, while another group of 10 monks helped in the reconstruction of Dair Anbâ Bûlâ.

After the restoration of the monastery, an Ethiopian community lived for some time with the Egyptians in the Monastery of St. Antony.

Pilgrims and travellers to the monastery of the 16th and 17th century included Dom Franciscus (1520), Belon du Mans (1539), Cassien (1617), Bernadus (1626) who carved his name into the wooden haikal-screen of the Church of St. Antony ; Coppin (1638) who witnessed the service conducted in Syriac.

In the 17th century, the Monastery of St. Antony was used by the Capuchin missionaries to the Orient as a language-school for the preparation of their priests. For the Capuchin missionaries, there was no better way to acquaint themselves with the language, than to enter a Coptic monastery.

Monceaux and Laisné (1667-1675) obtained many valuable *MSS*. from the library of the monastery. Wansleben (1672) provided us with a long and detailed account of his observations. De Maillet (1692) was again more interested in the library, and Nacchi (1697) was unable to decipher the Coptic texts he found, and thus did not take them with him.

The 18th century travellers provide much information. Lucas (1714), was sent by Louis XIV for study purposes, an anonymous traveller (1716) sketched the monastery, Sicard and J. S. Assemani (1716) secured some volumes for the Vatican Library. De Granger (1730) noticed 25 monks, and Sarqis of Hadjen (1765) scratched his name in Armenian on the north-wall of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Savary (1777) entered the monastery by a pulley and describes the water conditions.

In the latter part of the 18th century, the monastery underwent several changes. In 1766, the Church of St. Mark was rebuilt and in 1733, Lutfallah Shakir restored the Church of the Apostles. In 1783, Ibrâhîm Gawhârî renovated the walls of the monastery.

The 19th century travellers who have recorded their observations at St. Antony's Monastery are : Tattam (1839) who examined the library, Wilkinson (1843), the Russian Archimandrite Uspensky (1850) who scratched his name on the west-wall of the Church of St. Antony. Cardinal Massaia (1851) entered the monastery under the name of G. Bartorelli where he abducted Michelangelo, a Coptic-Catholic priest. Callinicus, Greek Orthodox Patriarch (1859) scratched his name on the north-wall of the Church of St. Antony. Pindy (1871), Chester

(1873) Schweinfurth (1877), Jullien (1883) have added considerably to our knowledge of the monastery.

That the monastery has played an important part in the general history of the Coptic Church can be seen from the large number of patriarchs that come from Mount Clysma. The leadership of St. Antony's Monastery became especially noticeable during the 17th, 18th and 19th century. Twelve Antonian monks ascended the patriarchal throne, and for almost 300 years they thus determined the history of the Church.

The most noteworthy visitors of the 20th century were H. E. Cogordan (1901) who presented a reproduction of Velazquez's *St. Antony* to the monastery. Lewis (1904) examined the library and Duke Johann Georg (1928), owing to several flat tires, arrived on foot. The wall paintings were studied and photographed by Whittemore (1930). Fedden wrote his monograph in 1935, and Morton visited St. Antony's in 1937.

According to the visitors' book at the guesthouse of the monastery, 367 foreigners have visited the monastery between 1953 and 1958.

The Church of St. Antony and the old south-wall belong to the few remains which date prior to the rebuilding of the present monastery in the 16th century. The present church existed in the 15th century as the smoke stains caused by the occupation of the Bedouins indicate. The Gothic graffiti on the walls of the church testify to the 13th-15th century. The paintings of the warrior-saints fall into the period of the restoration of the church by the sons of Ghâlîb in 1232-1233.

The Church of St. Antony can be divided into five parts for the listing of the wall-paintings.

The haikal : Christ as the Pantocrator, the Angels, the Enthroned Christ, the Sacrifice of Abraham, Abraham and Melchisedek, Jeremiah, Elijah, Isaiah, Moses, David, Daniel, St. Mark, St. Athanasius, St. Severus of Antioch, St. Dioscorus, St. Peter of Alexandria, St. Theophilus.

The passage in front of the haikal : The myrrh-bearing women, namely : Mary Magdalene, Mary, mother

of James, and Salome, Christ and two women saints, St. Mercurius, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, three unidentified saints, Nebuchadnezzar, St. George, St. Michael and St. Gabriel.

The nave : Two monks, St. Isaac, St. Paul the Simple, St. Samuel, St. Bishoi, four unidentified monks, a bishop, Abba Moses, two monks blessed by Christ, a monk with an angel, four unidentified monks and one unidentified female saint, two unidentified monks.

The narthex : St. Arsophonius, St. Thuan, two monks blessed by Christ, a warrior saint, St. Claudius, St. Victor, St. Menas, St. Theodore, three warrior saints, and SS. Sergius and Bacchus.

The small chapel located at the south-west corner of the church : Two angels, Christ between the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist, and the Cross adored by the Angels.

The church has three haikals, though only one is in use. Icons of Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Resurrection, St. George, St. Michael, and St. Mercurius are attached to the choir-screen, icons of St. George, St. Michael, St. Paul the Theban and St. Antony, St. Gabriel, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Mercurius decorate the nave-screen.

During the months from April to October, the Divine Liturgy is celebrated in the Church of the Apostles or the Church of SS. Peter and Paul. This church is to the east of the Church of St. Antony. It is much more recent than the former one. The Church of the Apostles contains three haikals. The northern haikal is dedicated to St. George, the central haikal to the Twelve Apostles and the southern haikal to Sitt Dimiana.

The icons and pictures attached to the northern haikal-screen represent the Falling-asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Life of Christ in fifteen miniature paintings, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul. The icons and pictures fastened to the choir-screen are those of St. George, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Victor, the Nativity, Kirillus IV, St. Athanasius, St. Paul the Theban and St. Antony,

St. Thecla, the Baptism of Christ, St. George, St. Mercurius, the Holy Sepulchre and St. Stephen. The icons and paintings of the nave-screen represent : Abraham intending to sacrifice Isaac, the Crucifixion, St. Barsum, St. George and St. Shenute.

For fifteen days during Lent, the monks celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the Church of St. Mark. The twelve-domed church, dating from 1766 has three haikals. The southern haikal is dedicated to St. Mercurius, the central haikal is dedicated to St. Mark and the northern haikal to St. Theodore.

The icons in the church portray St. George, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Mark the Evangelist, St. Paul the Theban and St. Antony.

For many centuries the church has attracted the piety of the Bedouins and the peasant pilgrims, because of the miracles associated with the relics of St. Mark which are kept in the wooden feretory on the north-wall of the church. The church of St. Mark is the only sanctuary in the monastery that contains any relics of a saint. On the wooden feretory of St. Mark we find a graffito with the following text : « *Ubi celebratur quadrigenta diebus et ultra* » (Here the mass was celebrated forty days and more (?)). The intimate connection that this church has had with members of the Latin Church is also evident from the Latin Terra Santa cross that is found above the entrance to the church.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is used only during the fifteen days' period of fasting before the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Lady on the 22nd of August. The church, which is located in the same building as the refectory, has only one haikal.

It is adorned with icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the Crucifixion, St. Stephen, the Nativity, the Holy Family, St. Paul the Theban and St. Antony, St. Stephen, another icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary and an icon of St. Juliana, St. Dimiana and St. Barbara.

The Chapel of St. Michael is located, as in the Wâdî al-Natrûn monasteries, on the top floor of the keep. The haikal-screen bears a date of the 17th century, though the church is much older. The church cannot be visited because of its dilapidated condition.

In addition to these five churches, there are two churches that are named after St. Paul the Theban. Both of these churches are not in use. The « old » Church of Anbâ Bûlâ was built by the Patriarch Kirillus IV. The church has three haikals, though they are completely empty. The « new » Church of Anbâ Bûlâ was built by Anbâ Tawfîlûs in 1930, but the building has not been completed.

The library is located in the « gaww » building and is subdivided into three collections.

The old collection contains 1007 manuscripts, the second collection has 347 printed works and the third collection 719 manuscripts and 361 printed books.

The spring of St. Antony supplies the monastic community with sufficient water for use. Situated in the southern part of the monastery, it provides about 100 cubic meters daily.

The monastery walls enclose an area of 18 feddans, of which 10 feddans belong to the garden. The walls, like those of the Wâdî al-Natrûn monasteries are ten to twelve metres high and surmounted by a *Chemin de ronde* (sentinel walk) with a width of 1-2 m. The state of the walls shows several repairs and additions. The walls, on which one can walk around the whole monastery, though with some difficulty, here and there, are about two kilometres in length, and it takes almost one hour to complete the tour.

2. — THE CAVE OF ST. ANTONY

We know from the *Vita Antonii* that the great Hermit, when he withdrew from his original cell at Pispir, did not

stay in the desert. He went up to the Mountain of Clysma, where he discovered a natural cave which at the same time was invisible from the wâdî. For those who visited him, gardens with fruits and vegetables were planted at the foot of the mountain, and we know that his disciples took care of him by supplying him with food. Of the several possible and available localities in the Wâdî 'Arabah, St. Antony chose the most remote place.

As one climbs the Mountain of Clysma to which St. Antony withdrew, one passes, after a steep and steady climb of half an hour, the cave of St. Paul the Simple. It is good to rest here for a while, and to gather strength for the last few hundred feet which prove to be more difficult.

> St. Paul the Simple, who lived in close proximity to his celebrated master, was one of his most faithful disciples. He was married to a beautiful but wicked woman who had left him and had been committing adultery.
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> Then St. Paul went to St. Antony to be accepted as a monk. But his old age, he was eighty years old, was against him. St. Antony compelled him several times to leave his cave and to return to his village. But St. Paul persisted, and after four days of fasting, St. Antony accepted him. It was his experience of solitary life that gave St. Paul the Simple the gift of healing and of casting out devils, a power in which he even surpassed his teacher.

The remains of his cell, a man-made cave, are a silent witness to this faithful contemporary of the great Hermit. About 5 m. east of this cave, Abûnâ Shârubîm wrote in Arabic the name of St. Antony by placing small rocks on the slope.

As one proceeds further, after a strenuous climb of about 100 m., one eventually reaches a small terrace. From here one has a magnificent view over the Wâdî 'Arabah.

The cave is 680 metres above the Red Sea and 276 metres above the monastery at 28° 55' latitude and 30° 3' longitude, about two kilometres south-east of the monastery. A wooden table now serves as altar. Three icons, two of Christ and one of St. Antony were placed in the cave, round about

1900. On the south-wall of the cave we find numerous mediaeval graffiti indicating that travellers in years past visited the cave. Among these graffiti, we also discover the name of Fr. Bernadus 1626, as well as a date of 1641 without a name.

The cave of St. Antony comprises four parts ; the terrace, the tunnel, the cave, and the balcony. The tunnel (at ground level 34 cm. wide and at breast height 98 cm. wide) connects the terrace with the cave. The balcony of St. Antony's cave is located about 3 m. below the terrace. It is here, where the Saint used to make his palm-leaf baskets. An expedition to the cave of the great Hermit is certainly worth the trouble, for it provides one with an unforgettable experience.

Lit. : Elias, R., « Le Couvent St. Antoine », *Collège de la Sainte Famille, XLVIII* (Jan. 1963), 21-22.

Fedden, H. R., « A study of the Monastery of St. Antony in the Eastern Desert ». *University of Egypt. Faculty of Arts Bull.* V, 1-60.

Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts.* Cairo, 1960.

Meinardus, O. « The Collection of Coptica in the Qasr of the Monastery of St. Antony », *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte, XVIII*, 1965, pp. 251-263.

Meinardus, O., " The Mediaeval Graffiti in the Monasteries of SS. Antony and Paul », *Studia Orientalia Christiana* : Coll. XI, 1966, pp. 513-528.

3. — THE HERMITAGES IN THE WADI 'ARABAH

The hermitages in the Wâdî 'Arabah are of interest only to the archaeologist and the student of Christian antiquities.

In addition to the cave of St. Antony, there are numerous cells which have been discovered in the Wâdî Natfeh and in the Wâdî Bikheit, about 36 km. north of the Monastery of St. Antony. The Wâdî 'Arabah is deeply cut by gorges, and the hermitages are situated in these gorges. They are difficult to discover because they are either completely hidden

in mounds of stones or else they are perched high in the cliffs. Generally, the monks used part of the overhanging rock and built in front of it simply a stone wall to close up the shelter. The dimension of a cell here is about 2 m. by 2.50 m. A little niche cut in the rock served as a cupboard. At one side a small opening provided some daylight. Regarding the entrance to the hermitages, it is rarely more than 70 cm. high and 50 cm. wide.

So far, three hermitages have been discovered, all at the bottom of wild gorges, and very far from the plain.To reach them on foot, one should allow 2 to 3 hours.

The hermitage at the Wâdî Natfeh can only be reached by climbing over several rocks. It might even be necessary to resort to a rope in order to descend to it.

Not far from the hermitage at the Wâdî Natfeh is another cave, the access to which is very difficult. A third hermitage, more easily approachable is literally hidden behind rocks near the Bir Bikheit. This hermitage consists of two small narrow cells.

There is little doubt that disciples of St. Antony settled in the Wâdî 'Arabah shortly after the death of the great Hermit and practiced a semi-coenibitic life.

Lit : Bissey, François et Chabot-Morisseau, René, « Notes de Voyages sur l'ouadi Arabah. Ruines de constructions chrétiennes dans les Branches est et ouest de l'ouadi Hannaka », *Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes Historiques et Géographiques de l'Isthme de Suez,* V, 1953-1954, 155-160.

Fontaine, A. L., « Le Monachisme Copte et la Montagne de Saint Antoine », *Bulletin de l'Institut des Etudes Coptes,* 1958.

4. — THE MONASTERY OF ST. PAUL THE THEBAN AT THE RED SEA

To reach the Monastery of St. Paul (Dair Anbâ Bûlâ) one follows the Red Sea road from Suez-'Ain Sukhna-Abû Darag as far as 26 km. south of the lighthouse station of Za'faranah. This road, recently repaired by the Shell Company, permits speedy travelling. A new (1958) sign in English and in Arabic points the way to the monastery. The

mountainous and rocky and sometimes mysterious environment through which the track leads has been pointedly described as « a terrible wilderness of mountainous country ».

After 13 km. of almost continuous bends and sharp curves, the monastery suddenly appears from around the last corner. The road is fair, except for the last 120 metres. A steep and rocky ascent leads to the large eastern gate which is lowered only to accommodate vehicles and camel caravans. The gate at the eastern en dof the south-wall is that used by visitors, and it leads to the guesthouse and the other main buildings of the monastery.

The monastery radiates a most friendly and relaxing atmosphere, and the monks go out of their way to make the visitor feel at home. Yet, it must not be considered that this hospitality is a sign of spiritual laxity. While ladies are permitted to stay overnight in the guestrooms of the Monastery of St. Antony, the same liberality is not offered by the monks of St. Paul's Monastery.

The reason for objecting to female visitors staying overnight may be due to the limited space of the guesthouse. This attitude, however, seems to have a long tradition, for Pococke, who wrote about the monastery in 1742, remarked that « a woman is not permitted to enter the convent ». Recently a small guest-house was built outside the walls of the monastery, where also ladies are permitted to stay overnight.

At the south-wall of the Cave Church of St. Paul there stands a modern marble feretory. The inscription on the tomb reads : « Born in Alexandria in the year 228 A.D., died in the year 343 A.D. ».

At the age of 16, St. Paul fled into the desert to escape the persecution of Decius. For some time he dwelt in a cave in front of which a palm-tree grew, but later he went to the Eastern desert. Before his death he was visited by St. Antony to whom he gave his tunic made of palm leaves.

Though the monastery of St. Paul the Theban, or Dair Anbâ Bûlâ, may not be the oldest Coptic monastery, it

was founded in memory of the first hermit of whom we have any knowledge.

The monastery must have been well known by the time of the sixth century, for Antoninus Martyr, a native of Placentia, visited the shrine between 560-570 A.D. An isolated Ethiopian reference informs us that Ghabriâl ibn Turaik, the 70th Patriarch (1131-1145) lived for three years in banishment in the Monastery of St. Paul. Abû Sâlih (13th cent.) states that the monastery was totally dependent upon the Monastery of St. Antony. At one time, the monastery was inhabited by Syrian monks. Al-Maqrîzî (15th cent.) refers to the monastery as the Monastery of the Tigers.

In the last decade of the 15th century, the Monastery of St. Antony suffered severely by the revolt and subsequent occupation of the Bedouins. It is quite likely that the Monastery of St. Paul experienced a similar fate, for we read in the history of the Monastery of the Syrians that Patriarch Gabriel VII (1525-1568) assisted in the rebuilding of this monastery. Of the thirty monks whom he commissioned for the task of reconstructing the monasteries in the Thebaid, ten were sent to the Monastery of St. Paul.

The monastery was visited by Ogier de Saint Chéron (1395), Ghillebert de Lannoy (1421), Coppin (1638), Gerard (1639), De Maillet (1692), an anonymous pilgrim (1716), Sicard and J.S. Assemani (1716), Granger (1730), Norov (1834), Tattam (1839), Bonomi (1840), Uspensky (1847), Schweinfurth (1876, 1877, 1878), Jullien (1883), Lewis and Gibson (1904), Da Seano (1908), Johann Georg (1930).

For several centuries, the administration of the Monastery of St. Paul was entrusted to the hegoumenos of the Monastery of St. Antony, a situation which may have prevailed until the 19th century.

The Monastery of St. Paul has altogether four churches of which three are situated in the ancient part of the monastery.

The Church of St. Paul or the Cave Church is the spiritual centre of the monastery. The sanctuary was originally built into the rock-cave, where St. Paul used to live. It is here that the bodily remains of St. Paul are preserved.

The walls of the church are covered with paintings which are generally speaking in better condition, though of inferior artistic quality than those of the Church of St. Antony in the Monastery of Mount Clysma. Of interest, is an ancient Gothic handwriting of a certain Franz Sembacher who must have visited the monastery in the early Middle Ages. Descending a few steps, one enters the « Dome of the Martyrs », which is decorated with the paintings of St. George, St. Victor, St. Theodore, St. Claudius, St. Theodore and St. Shalabi. The paintings on the east-wall of the entrance represent the «Little Strangers» of Dair al-Barâmûs, SS. Maximus and Domitius, and St. Arsenius, St. Agapius, St. Macarius, St. Samuel, and St. Apollo, while the paintings on the south-wall portray St. Michael, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Gabriel. Having entered the dark church, one faces to the east three haikals. The northern haikal is dedicated to the Twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse, the central haikal to St. Antony and the southern haikal to St. Paul. The west-wall of the church is covered with numerous paintings of which only some can be identified. The figures furthest to the south represent the five Archangels : Raphael, Suriel, Zaqiel, Sarathiel, the Angel of God according to *Daniel* III and Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. The new marble feretory of St. Paul stands at the south-wall of the church. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated in this church during the months of January, February and March, and the three haikals are used during this season interchangeably.

Close to the Church of St. Paul, almost above it, is the Church of St. Mercurius which was constructed in the latter part of the 18th century. It is used, however, only once a year during the week prior to Lent.

The church is of little interest, except for its beautiful haikal-screen with inlaid mother of pearl and ivory. The icons in the church represent St. Dioscorus, St. Mercurius or Abû Saifan, St. Macarius, St. Cyril, St. Paul the Theban and St. Antony, and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

On the third floor of the qasr is the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is impossible to gain entrance to the church.

because the whole building is unsafe. Furthermore, the key is with the monks in Bûsh.

The Church of St. Michael is the largest church within the monastery. Situated south-west of the Cave Church, it serves as the main church for Divine Services. On entering the church, one passes through the bell-tower situated just outside the main church. The Church of St. Michael has two sanctuaries, the northern haikal is dedicated to St. Michael and the southern haikal to St. John the Baptist.

In the Church of St. Michael, or to be exact in the south-haikal, the Divine Liturgy is celebrated from April to September on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The haikal-screen decoration is rather original in so far as the customary Twelve Apostles appear in the robes of Coptic desert monks.

The northern haikal of the church, or the sanctuary of St. John the Baptist, is used from the middle of September until the middle of November.

The outstanding icon which attracts one's attention is the icon of the head of St. John the Baptist on a charger on a gold background. It dates from 1760 and was painted by Ibrâhîm an-Nasîkh. The other icons are of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Mark the Evangelist, SS. Paul the Theban and Antony, St. George, St. Stephen, and the Mystical Supper. The floor of the church is covered with straw-mats, and the visitor is required to take off his shoes before entering the church.

There are altogether 32 cells in the monastery, of which 10 are unoccupied. As in the case of the Monastery of St. Antony, the Monastery of St. Paul gives the impression of being a small Egyptian village with its narrow streets and domestic animals.

The water at Dair Anbâ Bûlâ is supplied by two wells; the « Spring of Anbâ Bûlâ », is situated in the western part of the monastery. The water issuing from the mountain crevices flows into a cemented reservoir tank, and is used for

drinking and cooking purposes. A small drain leads the surplus water into a second reservoir which is used by the monks for washing purposes. A further drain carries off the water into a larger basin from where it is distributed for irrigation. The other spring is traditionally associated with Miriam, the musician, prophetess and sister of Moses and Aaron. During their Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites were supposed to have halted in this vicinity, and Miriam is said to have bathed in the pool. It is situated about 300 feet south of the monastery, but nowadays the monks make little use of the pool.

There are several caves in the vicinity of the monastery which at one time were inhabited. South of the monastery, between the « Pool of Miriam » and the south gate, is the former cave of Abûnâ Buqtur al-Bûlî. The cave belongs to the simple one-room type with a large entrance facing to the South. Debris, straw and ashes lead one to conclude that, at present, it is used by the Bedouins who live around the monastery. About one kilometre south-west of the monastery in the Wâdî Umm Sillima are three other caves, though none of them are inhabited by monks. As in the case of the cave of Abûnâ Buqtur, there is the same evidence here that these caves are used for shelter by the Bedouins. In order to visit the caves in the Wâdî Umm Sillima, however, it is quite essential to employ the services of a monk.

Lit. : Meinardus, O., « The Monastery of St. Paul in the Eastern Desert », *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Egypte*, *XXXIX*, 1961, 81-109.

Meinardus, O., « The *XVIIIth* Century Wall-Paintings in the Church of St. Paul the Theban, Dair Anbâ Bula, *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*, *XIX*, 1967-68, pp. 181-197.

5. — THE CHRISTIAN RUINS AT QATTAR

The Qattâr mountain range is situated between Qena on the Nile and Ghardaqa at the Red Sea coast. There are several Christian sites in the general Qattâr region which students of Christian Egypt might want to visit. Since the territory is almost inaccessible, students are strongly advised to employ the services of a guide.

The Umm Sidrî Monastery, visited by Tregenza in 1949, is situated about 35 km. south-west of Myos Hormos (Red Sea).

The Eastern Desert and the Red Sea mountains have long been a retreat for ascetics of various kinds. Palladius (4th-5th cent.) reports about Posidonius the Theban who lived by the side of the Porphyrites. Another hermit, Hierax, spent four years in the Porphyry Mountains. St. Piterum is reported to have resided there also.

The Christian Church at Qattâr is situated in the Nagât gorge of the Qattâr mountains, between Mons Porphyrites on the north and Mons Claudianus on the south. The church can be reached by travelling from Qena along the Wâdî Qena for about 40 km. Then turn into the Wâdî al-Atrash towards the East and continue passing al-Saqiyah and Dair al-Atrash.

The church was visited by Wilkinson (1822) and Tregenza (1949). On a roughly squared block of granite (30 cm. by 60 cm.) one could read the following text : « Flavius Julius, the most eminent leader of the Thebaid, built here a catholic (general)church, at the time when Hatres was bishop of Maximianopolis ». Flavius Julius was governor of Augustamnica in 341 A.D. We may assume that he was transferred there from the Thebaid shortly before. In any case, the latest date for the building of the little church is 339 A.D.

The presence of a church certainly implies a congregation. From the size of the church and the paucity of the sleeping places the population never exceeded twenty, and may have been much less. The earliest monks and hermits in the Red Sea mountains must have begun their ascetic life about the same time as those in the deserts of Nitria and Scetis. The inscribed stone, mentioned above, has been taken to the Services des Antiquités at Luxor by G.W. Murray in November 1949.

Lit. : Murray, G. W., « The Christian Settlement at Qattar », *Bull. Soc. Géogr. d'Egypte, XXIV*, 107-114.
Tregenza, L. A., *The Red Sea Mountains of Egypt*. London, 1955.
Wilkinson, G., *Modern Egypt and Thebes. A Description of Egypt* London, 1843.

6. — THE RUINS OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

The ruins of the Monastery of St. John Climacus are situated 150 m. south-west of the Frontier Police Control Station Bîr Abû Darag, between 'Ain Sukhna and the Lighthouse Abû Darag. From 'Ain Sukhna, the Control Station is situated 28 km. south on the Red Sea road leading to Râs Ghârib and Safâga.

The remains of the foundation-walls, the ruins of the principal buildings and the well are clearly discernible. The well is situated in the north-west corner of the monastery. On the south side, a small portion of the wall still stands next to a large rock. A camel-path, which leads from the north to the south, divides the monastic grounds.

The site is known as Abû Darag, *i.e.* Father of Steps. This term may imply, that this monastery was dedicated to St. John Climax (*i.e.* of the Steps). The ruins of the monastery are indicated on the *Carte des Déserts de la Basse Thébaïde aux environs des Monastères de St. Antoine et St. Paul Ermites avec le plan des lieux par où les Israélites ont probablement passé en sortant d'Egypte,* Cairo, 1717. Also, *the Carte de l'Egypte Ancienne et Moderne* by M. Bonne, Paris, 1762, mentions the ruined Monastery of St. John Climacus.

The Hermitages

About 300 metres towards the south of the well at the foot of the mountain, there is a prominent tree, growing at the entrance to a narrow gorge. From the tree, one sees the first hermitage on the right of the gorge. It is merely an overhanging rock, which has been walled in with rough stones. Above this hermitage, after 5 minutes walk, one arrives at a plateau with two other hermitages . One hermitage has completely collapsed ; as regards the other, one can trace the plan clearly. It is a large room, 5 m. on each side with a prayer-niche. It is surrounded by three other

rooms, which are smaller and longer. From this site, one can see to the north on the side of the mountain a fourth hermitage, which is recognizable by its small windows cut in the walls. A path, still visible, connects the hermitages.

Another hermitage is situated on the narrow plateau towards the north-west. It is divided by two small walls with a door. There are three rooms of about 5 m. by 3 m., lighted by little windows cut in the façade. At the entrance to the first room, there is a stone with a cross and inscriptions. The second and third room have four crosses painted in red ochre on the ceiling of the rock, the third room, the largest, appears to have been an oratory. Remains of inscriptions in red and yellow ochre on the rock are still visible. Numerous crosses are engraved on the rock, also the Alpha and Omega. The hermitages were discovered by the Rev. Fr. M. Martin, S.J. of the Collège de la Sainte Famille, Cairo.

Lit. : Sicard, C., *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*. Lyon, 1819, Vol. III, 278.
Martin, M., « Les Ermitages d'Abû Darag », *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*, XVIII, 1966, pp. 139-145.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES AT SINAI

THE ROUTE FROM CAIRO TO THE MONASTERY OF St. CATHERINE

Those who plan to visit the Monastery of St. Catherine ought to apply in person or through the services of a travel-agent at the Dependency of the Monastery of St. Catherine, 18 Midan al-Zâhir, Cairo (Tel. 52413) to obtain a letter of introduction. This letter will secure the pilgrim or visitor accommodation in the monastery. In addition, it is imperative to obtain from the Frontiers Department a Desert Frontiers Permit for which two passport photos are required. The issuing of the permit may take two days. Those taking their own vehicles are required to secure an additional permit for their car from the Frontiers Department. All cars ought to be well equipped for a desert journey, especially with regards to shovels, spades, boards, etc.

It is essential to take along sufficient food for the anticipated period of stay, as no food is available at the monastery. Gasoline is available only in Suez and Abû Zeneima. Regarding clothes, it is advisable to be prepared for hot and

cool climate. Women should not wear shorts in the monastery. For those taking electrical equipment, the voltage in the monastery is 220 volts.

Whereas in the Middle Ages it took the pilgrims eight days to reach the Monastery of St. Catherine from Suez, today, the distance of 442 km from Cairo to the monastery can be covered in a single day, though not without some discomfort. From Cairo one proceeds to Suez (134 km.), and from there to Kubri (8 km. north of Suez), where one crosses the Suez Canal. Here customs, frontier and passport formalities are taken care of. A second check of passports and frontier permits takes place on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal.

Twenty-three kilometres from Kubri in a southerly direction, one passes 'Ain Mûsâ, the Well of Moses. The little oasis is situated about 3 km. from the Gulf of Suez. There are nuemorus spriigs of various sizes in the oasis.

> Here, according to tradition, the Children of Israel made their first halt after crossing the Red Sea, and the largest spring in the oasis is said to have been the very spring which Moses sweetened by casting into its water a tree which was pointed out to him by the Lord (*Exodus* XV : 25). Moreover, tradition states that here Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances (*Exodus* XV : 20).

Continuing our journey in southerly direction, we come eventually (115 km. south of Suez) to the turn-off to Hammâm Faraûn or the Bath of Pharaoh.

> The Gabal Hammâm Faraûn rises out of the Gulf of Suez in the form of a blunted pyramid. From several small fissures in the rock there runs a stream of hot water which is still used by the Arabs as a cure for rheumatism. Visitors oughts to take care because of the almost boiling temperature of the water. The hot springs are situated on the north side of the mountain, facing the sea.

The one and only little town between Suez and the Monastery of St. Catherine is Abû Zeneima, 147 km. from Suez, or 162 km. from the monastery.

Abû Zeneima has a small harbour from which at one time copper and turquoise were exported. To-day, only manganese is handled at Abû Zeneima. A narrow-gauge railway transports the manganese from the Wâdî Baaba to the port. For those who want to stay overnight in Abû Zeneima, there is a Government Rest House with four bed-rooms, though food is not available. There are, however, two gasoline stations in Abû Zeneima.

Here, according to tradition, the Children of Israel camped (*Numbers* XXXIII : 10).

Travelling further southerly, we soon enter the famous Wilderness of Sin, situated between Elim and Sinai.

Here, « the whole congregation of the Children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the Children of Israel said unto them, Would God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full ; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger ». (*Exodus* XVI : 2-3).

Before entering the Oasis of Feiran, one passes a large granite rock, the Hessî al-Khattatîn, which stands at a sharp angle of the valley, surrounded by little pyramids of pebbles and small stones.

According to tradition, this rock was the one which yielded water when struck by Moses (*Exodus* XVII : 6). After the Children of Israel had drunk of the water, they amused themselves by throwing little stones and pebbles upon the rock.

A little further on, we reach the Oasis of Feiran, the « Pearl of Sinai » and by far the most fertile area in the

whole Sinai Peninsula. The distance from the Oasis of Feiran to the monastery is 63 km., passing first through the Wâdî Tarafa and then through the Wâdî al-Shaikh. Here, in the Wâdî al-Shaikh, we see the Tomb of the famous Nabî (Prophet) Saleh, which stands on a small hill.

> Nabî Saleh, who is buried here, is highly revered by the inhabitants of Sinai and is considered one of the most venerable Muslim patriarchs. The mûlid of Nabî Saleh takes place in May, and attracts the Bedouins from all parts of the Sinai Peninsula.

Continuing our journey through the Wâdî al-Shaikh, we reach after another 12 km. the Monastery of St. Catherine. In order to stay overnight in the monastery, each visitor must pay for lodging L.E. 1.000 daily. Those who want to camp outside the monastery may do so, but have to pay an entrance fee of P.T. 50 to visit the monastery.

Those who want to visit Gabal Mûsâ (Mount Moses) and Gabal Katerin (Mount of St. Catherine) are required to be accompanied by a monk. The fee for the camel to Gabal Mûsâ, actually only to a site near the Plain of the Cypress, is P.T. 50, whereas the fee for the camel to Gabal Katerin is L.E. 1.000 An additional sum of L.E. 1.000 is to be paid for the monk who accompanies the pilgrim to Gabal Mûsâ, and L.E. 1.500 to Gabal Katerin.

THE OASIS OF FEIRAN

The Oasis of Feiran is situated north of Gabal Serbal. One approaches the oasis through the Wâdî Feiran, which is the most important valley in the Sinai Peninsula. The granite slopes, flanking the valley, are at certain places not far apart, while at other parts the wâdî expands to a considerable width.

A little before reaching the oasis, one passes a rock which is called Hessî al-Khattatîn. This is one of the many rocks which is pointed out to have been struck by Moses and which subsequently yielded water. (*Exodus* XVII : 6).

The Wâdî Feiran is inhabited by approximately 500 Arabs. Those living in the Wâdî Feiran are known as the Geratsias, those inhabiting the area near the Red Sea are known as the Zenas, while those living around the Monastery of St. Catherine are known as the Gabaliyahs. The latter were Wallachian slaves who were introduced to Sinai by the Emperor Justinian to serve the monks of the monastery.

Afer having passed al-Heswah, one eventually reaches a wider part of the wâdî with the isolated and rocky hill of al-Meharra. On the summit of this hill are the ruins of an early Christian church and monastery.

The Oasis of Feiran was occupied at a very early period by the Amalekites, and it was here that the battle between the Amalekites and the Israelites was fought. Maqrîzî even refers to the site as the town of the Amalekites. In the 4th century A.D., Feiran had become an episcopal city around which there were several monasteries and numerous hermitages. The remains of ancient monasteries and hermitages are nowhere more numerous than here on the rocky slopes and plateaus of Gabal Serbal. In the 5th century, the bishop of Feiran was a certain Nathyr or Nateiras, and the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) accorded to the Oasis an archbishop of its own, who, howexer, was subordinate to the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Following the Council of Chalcedon, we hear of Macarius, Bishop of Feiran. During the 5th century, the monasteries and hermitages of Feiran suffered severely from the attacks of the Blemmyes and the Saracens. At this time, the monks of Feiran embraced the teachings of the Monophysites and the Monothelites. Theodorus, Bishop of Feiran, was condemned twice for heresy, in 649 A.D. and in 680-681 A.D.

It is generally agreed that prior to the efforts of Justinian, who erected a church halfway up to Gabal Mûsâ (perhaps on the site of the present Chapel of

Elijah), and who also constructed a strong fortress at the foot of the mountain (the site of the Monastery of St. Catherine), Feiran or Pharan with Gabal Serbal was the main centre of monastic life in Sinai. Feiran (the Rephidim of the Old Testament) was visited by the 6th century pilgrims Cosmas (535 A.D.) and Antonius Martyr (565 A.D.). The account of the latter states that regularly organized pilgrimages to Rephidim took place. Following the Arab Conquest in the 7th century, the monastery and the hermitages were abandoned, and the monastic life at Feiran became gradually extinct.

The remains of the basilica of Feiran can still be seen. A small number of capitals, some ornamented with crosses, Byzantine columns, indicate that at one time an imposing cathedral was situated here. In addition to destructions by the Arabs, much has been destroyed by the floods which come down from Gabal Serbal. Small caves and holes around the Wâdî Feiran still indicate the cells, where the anchorites of Pharan used to live. Many of the hermitages and cells were built of stones and were plastered with clay.

The following Old Testament passages refer to Rephidim : *Numbers* XXXIII : 13-14 ; *Exodus* XVII, XVIII, XIX : 2.

The Monastery of St. Catherine maintains a garden in the Wâdî Feiran with a monk as the custodian. This establishment dates from 1898. The garden yields many fruits and vegetables, *e.g.* mandarines, lemons, olives, pomegranates, pears, dates etc. Numerous capitals, socles, and fragments of pillars of the ancient basilica are assembled in the garden. Two sections of pillars are adorned with engraved crosses. A capital distinctly shows the sign of the cross. There is no chapel in the garden. One or two visitors can, if need be, stay overnight at the Monastery Garden. The water tank has been recently installed (1959).

THE GABAL AL-TAHUNA

Almost opposite the Monastery Garden at Wâdî Feiran rises the Gabal al-Tahuna or the Mountain of the Mill (230 metres). On the summit of the mountain are the remains of an ancient church. The steep path leading to the summit is flanked with the ruins and remains of chapels and hermitages. The ruins are very interesting and the climb is certainly worthwhile. The most important one of the many churches is situated at the very top of the mountain. The remains of the apse, an arch, and the tiled floor are still discernible. The outside and inside walls of the church were covered with plaster.

North of the Gabal al-Tahuna rises the summit of the Gabal al-Banât or the « Mountain of the Virgins ».

On the summit of the mountain there are the ruins of the Chapel of the Holy Virgin. The Bedouins, on the other hand, maintain that the name is derived from the two Tawara maidens who had been ordered to marry against their wishes and who, therefore, fled to the mountains. When captured, they plaited their tresses together and precipitated themselves from the summit into the abyss.

THE GABAL SERBAL

The Gabal Serbal or the « Mountain of the palm-grove of Baal » rises to the south of the Oasis of Feiran. The ascent to Mount Serbal is difficult and very fatiguing and should be attempted only by experienced mountain-climbers. The most convenient path leads through the Wâdî 'Aleyat on the north side, but the ascent may also be made through the Wâdî Selaf.

Some authorities maintain that Gabal Serbal is the real Sinai where Moses received the Decalogue. There is good reason to believe that this view was held by the early anchorites and monks, who had withdrawn to the caves on and near Gabal Serbal. To this day, the visitor sees the numerous caves which at one time were inhabited by hermits.

Indeed, Gabal Serbal is a very imposing mountain, and authorities like Eusebius and Cosmas have identified it with the Mount Horeb of the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, since Feiran and Sinai are always intimately associated in the chronicles of the fathers of Sinai, it would seem justifiable to identify Gabal Sinai with Gabal Horeb. If it be asked how the « Mount of the Lord » came to be transferred from one mountain to another, one may answer that the early Christians who settled at Sinai found no memorials of the Exodus, arbitrarily assigned Old Testament names to the various hills and valleys. As long as Feiran was a powerful place and the see of a bishop, its right to claim Gabal Serbal as the « Mount of the Lord » was not challenged. But after the Christians of Feiran had lapsed into heresy, this right was denied by the Orthodox Church, and the hermits who had settled in the region of Gabal Mûsâ came to be recognized as the genuine Sinaites, for whose protection Justinian caused a fortified monastery to be built. Consequently, the monks and hermits of Gabal Serbal migrated to Gabal Mûsâ for the sake of their own safety and protection.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. CATHERINE

The Monastery of St. Catherine, which is situated on the north-eastern granite slopes of Gabal Mûsâ, the Mountain of Moses, has a long and distinguished history, of which, however, only some highlights can be mentioned. One of the first references to Sinai in the Christian Era comes from the pen of Dionysius of Alexandria (190-265 A.D.) who recalls, that these mountains served as a place of refuge in times of persecutions. By the beginning of the 4th century, a considerable number of anchorites and hermits were attracted to Mount Sinai, owing largely to its seclusion and greater safety ; and even prior to the establishment of the monastery, Sinai teemed with hermits from Egypt and other places of the Roman Empire, thus, *e.g.*, in 324 A.D., Agapit, a Cappadocian soldier, went to Sinai. In 337 A.D., St. Helena, the mother of St. Constantine, is said to have visited the hermits

and to have ordered the construction of the Chapel of the Burning Bush on the site, where God revealed Himself to Moses. As early as the 4th century, the anchorites were terribly persecuted as indicated in the traditions of the martyrdom of the Forty Hermits of Sinai. In 370 A.D., Amonius, a monk of Canopus, visited Sinai and the Burning Bush and also ascended Gabal Mûsâ. A short time after his arrival, however, he witnessed the sack of the monastery by the Blemmyes. Together with the hegoumenos, he took refuge in the tower, while the Blemmyes slew the monks in their cells.

In 390 A.D., Silvanus retired to the Sinai Desert, where for a few years he inhabited a cave with Zacharias. Silvanus presided over a colony of hermits, who, desiring to follow his example, had settled near his cell. One of the disciples of Silvanus was Nathyr, the first bishop of Pharan. The Pilgrim of Etheria (385 A.D.), probably a Spanish abbess or nun, has provided us with an interesting description of her ascent to Gabal Mûsâ, where she found a small church surrounded by a number of cells of anchorites. On her descent to the valley, she visited the anchorites who had settled near the Burning Bush.

According to Procopius and Eutychius (Said ibn al-Batrak), the Emperor Justinian built a fortified monastery as well as a church which was dedicated to the Holy Virgin Mary in 537 A.D. for the protection of the monks and hermits who were spread all over the mountain and in the Valley of the Burning Bush. Later, Justinian ordered the construction of the Church of the Transfiguration « to the memory and rest of our late Empress Theodora ». One may, therefore, accept the traditional date for the building of the Church of the Transfiguration to be between 561 A.D., the year of Theodora's death, and 565 A.D., the year of Justinian's death. (The inscription of the date of the construction of the monastery, however, is not older than the 12th century). Following is the brief account of Procopius (560 A.D.).

« In this Mt. Sina dwell monks, whose life is but a careful study of death, and who therefore enjoy without fear the solitude which is dear to them. Since these monks have no desires, but are superior to all human passions, and as they possess nothing and spend no care on their persons, nor seek for pleasure from anything else whatever, the Emperor Justinian built a church for them, which he dedicated to the Virgin, that they might therein spend their life in continual prayer and service of God. He did not build this church on the summit of the mountain, but a long way below it ; for it is not possible for a man to pass the night upon the peak, because at night continuous thunderings and other yet more terrible manifestations take place, which overpower man's strength and reason... At the foot of the mountain, our Emperor also built a strong fort, and placed in it a very considerable garrison of soldiers, in order that the barbarian Saracens might not from that point secretly invade Palestine ».

The monastery also greatly benefited by a gift from Justinian of one hundred Wallachian slaves and one hundred Egyptian slaves. The Gabaliyahs, who to this day render their services to the monks, are the descendants of these slaves. Though at one time Christians, the Gabaliyahs have all become Muslims.

Between 560 and 570 A.D., Antonius of Placentia observed a multitude of monks at Mount Sinai, who, carrying crosses and singing psalms, came to meet him and his party. By the time of his visit, the monastery was surrounded by a wall, and there were three abbots who were learned in the tongues of Latin, Greek, Syriac, Coptic and Persian. He visited the chapel on Gabal Mûsâ which was six feet in length and width. In this place, so he reports, many of the monks, out of devotion, cut off their hair and beard and dispersed them. Moreover, the pagans preserved on the holy mountain a marble idol, which was guarded by a priest who was dressed in a dalmatic. By the latter part of the 6th century, the monastery had gained international significance. Gregory I (570-593 A.D.), Patriarch of Antioch, had served as a monk in Sinai, and Gregory the Great (590-604 A.D.),

Pope of Rome, sent a letter to John, the hegoumenos of Sinai, providing furniture for a hospice.

At the time of its foundation, the monastery was dedicated to the Transfiguration, and it was not until the 9th or the 10th century, that the tradition of the Virgin-martyr St. Catherine of Alexandria spread to Sinai. Following the Arab Conquest of Egypt in 640 A.D., it was said that Muhammad the Prophet had granted a firman to the monks of Sinai, whereby their lives and property were to be respected by the Muslim rulers. The tradition maintains that the monks had accorded to Muhammad a hospitable reception, and that the document was written by Abû Talib and impressed with the blackened hand of the Prophet, who himself could not write. A copy of this document is exhibited at the monastery. This document was given to the monks by Sultan Salîm I who is said to have taken the original document to Constantinople (1517) for the purpose of enriching his collection of firmans. The following is the text of the alleged firman, which was published by Muhammad ibn 'Abd-Allah to the world at-large :

> « If a priest or a hermit retires to a mountain, a hermitage, a plain, a desert, a town, a village or a church. I shall be his protector against every enemy, I, personally, my troops and my subjects. Because these priests are my rayas, I shall try not to do them any harm. One should not take anything from them, except voluntary contributions, without forcing them to do so. It is not allowed to move a bishop from his diocese, nor a priest from his religion, nor a hermit from his cell. None of the objects of the church must be used in the construction of mosques, not even for the buildings of Muslims. He who does not conform to this would be going against God's Law and that of his Prophet. The Christians will be helped to keep their churches and their houses, and this will help them to keep their religion. They are not obliged to carry arms, but the Muslims will carry them for them, and they shall not disobey this order until the end of the world. This edict has been written by Abû Talib on the third of Muharram in the second year of the Hijra. It is signed by the Prophet himself. Blessed

is he who obeys and miserable is he who does not hold to its content ».

Whether a 7th century document ever existed or not, one thing is certain, that the monks of Sinai had special privileges which protected them as well as their property and their library. Only thus can one explain the monumental collection of ancient treasures, documents and books. By the middle of the 9th century, Sinai became an independent bishopric, and Constantinus, the first Bishop of Sinai participated in the Fourth Council of Constantinople in 869 A.D. About 950 A.D., the monastery was sacked, and the monks of Sinai are reported to have fled for their lives. In the latter part of the 10th century, al-Muqaddasi mentions in his *Description of Syria including Palestine* that the Christians have a monastery in Mount Sinai which is surrounded by some well-cultivated fields, and that there grow some olive-trees, which are said to be those mentioned in the Qurân, where it is written concerning that « blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West » (XXIV, 35).

In the beginning of the 11th century, the monastery was again in a flourishing state, and was visited by large numbers of pilgrims. At this time, the celebrated Simeon resided here as a monk. Simeon was known for his linguistic abilities, being able to converse in Syriac, Arabic, Greek, Coptic and Latin. In 1026, Simeon went to Europe to collect the annual alms for the monastery, at which occasion he bestowed numerous relics of St. Catherine upon charitable donors, and the father of Henry V, Count of the Campagne, received a hand of St. Catherine in flesh and blood (!). Gregorius I, Bishop of Sinai, went to Bologna in Italy in response to a vow, where he died in 1032.

During the latter part of the 11th century, Sinai became an archbishopric, though at the time of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Greek Archbishop of Sinai was suffragan of the Latin Archbishop of Petra who resided in Kerak or Krak. In spite of promises of protection, the monks lived in constant fear, for when Baldwin I (1058-1118), the first

King of Jerusalem, wished to visit Sinai, the monks entreated him to give up his intention, as such a visit might excite suspicion of the rulers and prove detrimental to the monastery.

During the early Middle Ages, monks of the various nationalities resided inside as well as in the vicinity of the monastery. Ethiopians and Copts, Armenians and Georgians were attracted to Mount Sinai to live and to die in the shadow of Gabal Mûsâ. Thousands of pilgrims from all over Europe went to Sinai as part of their Holy Land pilgrimages, offering jewels and other precious objects to the Alexandrian Virgin-Martyr.

> Fetellus (1130), archdeacon of Antioch, saw on the summit of Gabal Mûsâ a beautiful and venerable church, situated on the spot where God gave Moses the Law. Of so venerable dignity was the church, that none dared to enter it, or even to ascend the mountain, unless they had first rendered themselves acceptable by confession.

In the beginning of the 13th century, the monastery increased its external holdings. Simeon I, Archbishop of Sinai (1203), travelled to Crete, where the inhabitants bestowed on him a great deal of wealth. A few years later, the Archbishop of Crete claimed Mount Sinai, but Pope Honorius III (1216-1227) issued a bull in which he confirmed Simeon as bishop in the possession of Mount Sinai, Fukara, Lejah and Raithou with its plantations. These possessions were also confirmed by Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254) in a letter of December 16, 1250. Ludolph von Suchem (1350) supplies us with an account of his visit to the monastery.

> The monastery, fenced with iron doors, is well fortified in every way. In it are more than 400 Greek, Georgian and Arab monks, both clerical and lay, who do not always abide in the monastery, but are scattered abroad here and there. They live most devout, strict and chaste lives, they rarely drink wine except on special feast days, never eat meat, but feed on salads, vegetables, beans, dates etc. The relics of St. Catherine are kept on the right hand side of the high-altar in a

chest of white marble. The archbishop takes one of the holy bones in his hands, rubs it hard with a silver instrument shaped like a rod, whereupon oil bursts forth from the pores like sweat. The feelings of the Sinai monks towards the Latins must have been quite cordial, for Ludolph recalls that the memory of Pope Gregory the Great remained in veneration in the monastery, and that they celebrated each year his feast day with special devotions.

A Latin chapel in the monastery made it possible for medieval pilgrims to celebrate the Mass. Moreover, to many chapels and sites indulgences were attached which the Western pilgrims were anxious to secure.

In spite of the Photian Schism, envoys to the West went every year to collect donations for the Monastery of St. Catherine, and several monarchs communicated with the monks of Sinai and sent presents to them.

During the 15th century, the monastery suffered severely from poverty and instability. Pero Tafur (1435) found only sixty monks living in a most miserable state, and Johann Tucher of Nürnberg (1479) found the monastery closed and uninhabited. A monk from Tor, who had been informed by a merchant that a caravan of pilgrims was on its way, hastened to serve pilgrims as a guide to the sanctuaries of the mountains. The monk and the pilgrims lodged in tents in the monastery garden. In 1484, however, Felix Fabri visited the monastery and described in detail the various churches, altars and chapels. The Latin Chapel was situated near the guest-house, and in the principal church, « they worshipped the relics by kissing the virgin's head ».

« First the Greek monks, then the pilgrims. So many of the relics are taken, that only less than half of the sacred body is left. They put their offerings of gold and silver into the coffin, chanting the antiphonal and obtained plenary indulgences... ».

After having twice climbed Gabal Katerin (once after having climbed Gabal Mûsâ) and on the following

day with the older and weaker brethren, Fabri comments : « After much labour and fatigue, we came down to the Monastery of the Forty Saints, almost shoeless, for the ascent and descent of those two mounts had ruined us in shoes, so that some knights had to go barefoot hence to Cairo, and others had broken shoes with no soles on them ».

In 1516, the Arabs attacked the monastery again expelling the monks, yet, when Belon du Mans (1546) visited Mount Sinai, he noticed some 60 monks within the monastery. A few years later, in 1565, the monastery was again temporarily abandoned. William Lithgow (1582) saw some 200 Ethiopian monks at Mount Sinai, who were guarded by 100 soldiers from the incursions of the Arabs. In the beginning of the 17th century, the monastery was frequently closed, thus for example in 1600, 1618, 1632, 1656-1660. Von Troilo (1666), however, reported 70 monks within the monastery, and Poncet (1700) counted 50 desert fathers. In 1721, the monks built a small chapel over the alleged tomb of St. Catherine on Gabal Katerin, and the chapel on Gabal Mûsâ was subdivided into two sections, the larger section for the Greeks, the smaller one for the Latins. The most remarkable church in those days was the Church of St. Panteleemon on the Mountain of Sinai. The last archbishop who resided in the monastery was Kirillus, who died there in 1760. In 1782, after lengthy disputes lasting from 1575 to 1782, the Monastery of St. Catherine gained full autonomy.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the monks received many valuable gifts from kings and queens. Thus, for example, Charles VI of France presented to the monastery a chalice (1411) and Louis XI of France promised to the monastery the sum of 2,000 ducats in fulfilment of a vow. Other heads of state, who donated liberally to the monks included Isabel, Queen of Spain, Maximilian, Emperor of Germany, Louis XIV, King of France. The most generous donations, however, came from the Tsars of Russia, who were the most loyal supporters of the monastery.

At the time of the French Expedition to Egypt in 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte, who respected and confirmed the privileges of the monks of Sinai, gave orders to repair the old walls. Their contribution to the monastery is kept alive by the famous Kleber Tower which was built on order of the French General.

During the reign of Muhammad 'Alī (1805-1848) the monks were entitled to a portion of the custom-house dues levied in Cairo. In 1853, 'Abbâs I, grandson of Muhammad 'Alī, visited Mount Sinai, where he formed the extravagant plan of building for himself a villa on a rock on Mount Sinai. But on July 13, he was assassinated before his designs could be executed. At the time of Heinrich K. Brugsch's visit (1866), twenty-six monks inhabited the monastery.

> At the monastery, Brugsch met the 70 year old Prince of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, who was recently married to a young American lady. The prince had walked from Suez to St. Catherine's Monastery in six days.

By this time, the library, near the Chapel of St. John, was systematically arranged in cupboards with glassdoors, yet there was no catalogue.

In 1872, Callistratus was installed as archbishop in the monastery, a memorable event, since for 112 years, no archbishop had resided on Mount Sinai.

Throughout the centuries, the monks of Mount Sinai have lived in friendly relations with the Egyptian Government, partly due to the firman of the Prophet, partly for the sake of ensuring the safety of the Mecca pilgrims, whose route passed through the territory of the monks. Men and women of all nations and ranks have visited the monastery, as one can see by paging through the visitor's book. Large and small groups of pilgrims have annually climbed the Mountain of God and sought shelter in the monastery. Burckhardt (1816) relates that a caravan of 800 Armenians arrived at the monastery from Jerusalem, while at another occasion

500 Copts came from Cairo. Nowadays, several hundred visitors travel to St. Catherine's Monastery every year.

THE CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

The Church of the Transfiguration is the most impressive building within the monastery. The basilica was built by the Emperor Justinian between 561 and 565 A.D. in commemoration of Theodora, his wife, and it was so designed as to incorporate the Chapel of the Burning Bush. Built in Byzantine style, it is the only ancient church of its kind in Egypt which has not fallen into ruin. Indeed, it is one of the great churches of Christendom which has attracted thousands of pilgrims in spite of the long and strenuous journey.

> According to tradition, which, however, is supported by the testimony of the Pilgrim of Etheria (385 A.D.), a church was situated near the site of the Burning Bush. It is possible, therefore, that the original building dates back to the time of St. Helena who is considered to be the founder of the church.

The 6th century Church of the Transfiguration retained its name until the early Middle Ages, when the relics of St. Catherine were translated from the Gabal Katerin to the church. Since that time, the church became known also as the Church of St. Catherine.

One approaches the church by descending fifteen steps below the present ground-level of the monastery. The name Iakobos, one letter for each of the upper steps, is engraved in stone. As one enters through the door (11th century Fatimid) which leads to the narthex, the visitor should notice the engraved coats-of-arms of the mediaeval pilgrims. More important, however, are the beautiful panel designs representing crosses, birds, date-palms, leaves and other designs, which we find on the 6th century Byzantine doors leading to the nave.

The church is divided into three aisles which are separated by two rows of six columns each. At the eastern end of the central aisle is a large apse which is adorned with the famous 7th century mosaic of the Transfiguration.

In addition to the figures of Christ, Moses and Elijah, St. John, St. Peter and St. James, which are part of the New Testament Event of the Transfiguration, there are the pictures of prophets, apostles, and saints. Each figure is accompanied by the name of the person it represents. Above the apse, on the north side, Moses kneels before the Burning Bush, on the south side, Moses is shown as standing before Mount Sinai with the tables of the Law in his hands.

At the eastern end of the two side aisles are the entrances to the Chapel of St. James on the north and the Chapel of the Forty Holy Martyrs of Tor on the south. From either of these chapels access can be obtained to the Chapel of the Burning Bush, which is situated behind the central apse. Those entering the Chapel of the Burning Bush will remove their shoes following the Biblical injunction « put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground ». (*Exodus* III, 5).

The Chapel of the Burning Bush, which marks the site where God is said to have appeared to Moses, is considered the holy of holies of the monastery. The chapel is adorned with beautiful blue-green-white Damascene tiles. The site, where the bush is said to have stood, is indicated by a silver plate. Above this site is the altar. There are fourteen sanctuary lamps which provide a dim light. Visitors ought to notice the famous icon of the Tree of Jesse on the west-wall of the chapel. Early Christianity saw in the Burning Bush an image of the Virginity of the Theotokos, and the Church still chants : Rubrum quem viderat Moyses incombustum, conservatam agnovimus tuam laudabilem virginitatem. Dei genitrix, intercede pro nobis.

On both sides of the walls of the main church there are several chapels. The chapels on the northern side are dedi-

cated to St. Antipas, SS. Constantine and Helena, and St. Marina. Those on the southern side are dedicated to SS. Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Holy Virgin, St. Simeon Stylites, and the Unmercenary Saints, SS. Cosmas and Damian.

Each of the twelve columns of the centre aisle stands for one month. Moreover, each of the columns is decorated with an icon which represents those saints which the Church commemorates during that particular month. The icons on the columns on the north side, therefore, represent the saints which are commemorated during the months of August, June, April, February, December and October, whereas the icons on the southern columns represent those saints who are commemorated during the months of July, May, March, January, November and September. To these columns is affixed a small metal cross. It is said that each column contains the relics of a martyr who is commemorated during the particular month for which the column stands.

The church floor is paved with various kinds of marble. The ceiling, painted in azure, is adorned with golden stars, the sun and the moon. Adjoining the third column on the north side is a marble pulpit, adorned with beautiful miniatures. This pulpit was presented to the church in 1787. Near the fourth column on the south side there is the archiepiscopal throne.

The iconostasis, which is adorned with large icons of St. John the Baptist and the Holy Virgin (north) and Christ and St. Catherine (south), dates from 1612 and was donated to the monastery by Cosmas of Crete. In front of the iconostasis there are six large candle-sticks, three on each side of the Holy Doors, dating respectively from 1719, 1701, and 1716.

In the sanctuary, behind the iconostasis, there is on the south side under a domed canopy, the reliquary of St. Catherine. The reliquary contains two smaller silver cases, the one containing St. Catherine's skull wearing a crown of gold

with precious stones, the other contains her left hand which is decorated with rings of gold. The two large silver chests with the images of St. Catherine behind the iconostasis are the gifts of the Tsars of Russia.

One of the chests is a gift by Ivan and Peter Alexievitch and Sophia Alexievna in 1688, whereas the other chest is a gift of Alexander II (1860). Ivan was the step-brother of Peter the Great, and Sophia was the regent during the minority of these two princes.

These chests are used for storing some of the precious gifts which were received from the royal houses of Europe.

THE CHAPELS OF THE MONASTERY OF St. CATHERINE

In addition to the Church of the Transfiguration, there are numerous small chapels within and without the monastery compound. These chapels are ordinarily used only on the feast days of their respective patron saints. Thus, many chapels are actually used only once a year. There are ten chapels within the monastery compound, and fifteen chapels outside the monastery.

The Chapel of the Five Martyrs is situated south of the Church of the Transfiguration. It is dedicated to SS. Eustratius, Euxemius, Eugenius, Martharius and Orestes. The wall-paintings are of recent origin and were executed by Fr. Pachomius (died 1958).

The Chapel of the Holy Virgin is situated south-west of the Church of the Transfiguration. The chapel, which is completely dark, is adorned with numerous icons, the most outstanding being a Russian icon of the Holy Virgin on the iconostasis. The haikal-doors show the Annunciation. On the west-wall there is a large icon of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin.

The Chapel of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin is situated in the same building as the Chapel of the Holy Virgin. At one time, this chapel, being on the first floor, was used as the residence of the Archbishop of Sinai. It is also known as the old library. Noticeable is the carved iconostasis and two beautiful icons of Christ and St. Catherine. The apse of the chapel is adorned with wall-paintings by Fr. Pachomius.

The Chapel of St. Stephen is a yellow building which stands by itself south of the two former chapels. This chapel is used for the funeral services which are conducted in the monastery. On the west and the north walls are four wall-paintings of New Testament events, one of them being the Martyrdom of St. Stephen. The visitor should notice the beautiful wall-painting of St. Catherine on the south-wall. The apse is adorned with modern wall-paintings by Fr. Pachomius.

The Chapel of St. Antony, which is situated opposite the stairway leading to the guest-rooms, belonged at one time to the old library. The chapel has no iconostasis and its appearance is very simple. Noticeable is the large icon of St. Antony. On the north and south-walls there are many modern Arabic graffiti, doubtless those of Coptic pilgrims.

The Chapel of St. John the Baptist is situated nearby the former chapel. As in the case of so many of the other chapels, the apse is adorned with wall-paintings by Fr. Pachomius. These wall-paintings represent several Christian symbols. Visitors should notice the icons of St. Antony surrounded by twenty saints and of St. John the Baptist's head (1938).

The Chapel of the Holy Apostles is situated below the former chapel and is completely dark. Of special interest is the marble chandelier, also the icons of SS. Peter and Paul on the north and the south walls. The throne of the archbishop is beautifully carved. The wall-paintings are executed by Fr. Pachomius.

The Chapel of St. George, which is situated on the top of the north wall of the monastery, was constructed by Napoleon's architects. The chapel is remarkable on account of its modest simplicity. Notice the icons of the Martyrdom of St. George and the 12th century icon of the Holy Virgin and St. Procopius.

The Chapel of St. John the Theologian is situated west of the former chapel on the north wall of the monastery. Like the Chapel of St. George, this one is very simple. The wall-paintings in the apse, executed by Fr. Pachomius, give the appearance of mosaics.

The Chapel of St. Tryphon is situated in the monastery-yard above the charnel house. Services are conducted in this chapel every Friday during Lent. The chapel was dedicated in 1888. On the south wall there is the icon of St. Onuphrius and that of St. Tryphon. The wall-paintings are the work of Fr. Pachomius.

The chapels outside the monastery can be classified into two categories, those which one sees or visits while ascending Gabal Mûsâ, and those which one sees or visits while ascending Gabal Katerin.

The chapels on the way to Gabal Mûsâ :

The Chapel of SS. Gallaction and Epistime (east of the monastery).
The Chapel of SS. Theodoroi (east of the monastery).
The Chapel of the Holy Trinity on Gabal Mûsâ.
The Chapel of Elijah and Elisha.
The Chapel of St. John the Baptist.
The Chapel of St. Anne.
The Chapel of St. Panteleemon.
The Chapel of the Girdle of the Holy Virgin.
The Chapel of the Holy Virgin.

The chapels on the way to Gabal Katerin :

The Chapel of Aaron.

The Chapel of the Holy Virgin (al-Bustân).
The Chapel of the Holy Apostles.
The Chapel of the Unmercenary Saints.
The Chapel of the Forty Martyrs and the Chapel of St. Onuphrius.
The Chapel of St. Catherine on Gabal Katerin.

THE MOSQUE OF 'UMAR

In comparison with the architectural beauty of the majority of buildings, the mosque is a very simple structure which is situated near the belfry. The Gabaliyahs, the Muslim servants of the monks, are entrusted with the responsibility of the mosque. Visitors remove their shoes before entering the building.

According to tradition, the mosque was built during the reign of al-Hâkim (996-1021) to protect the monastery from devastation. The story is told that when al-Hâkim approached the monastery, the monks busied themselves to erect the building and the minaret ; moreover, they persuaded al-Hâkim to accept the firman of protection which was said to be given to the monastery by the Prophet.

In reality, the mosque was built during the caliphate of al-Amir in the beginning of the 12th century in fulfilment of a wish of Abû Mansûr Anushtakin (1106), as it is recorded in the Kufic text on the minbar. The mosque measures 10 metres by 7 metres and contains an interesting small low lectern of carved wood. The Fatimid minbar is considered to be of great antiquity and originality, since only two others like this one exist, one in Qûs, Upper Egypt, the other in Hebron, Jordan.

Until recently, the mosque was closed. It is now open, and the floor is covered with several red carpets. Several light blue banners are kept in the mosque.

As peculiar as it may appear to find a mosque within a Christian monastery, there is evidence that other Christian monasteries adhered to the same practice. The Monastery of St. Menas at Mareotis used to have a mosque in which the Bedouins worshipped.

THE REFECTORY

The ancient refectory is one of the most interesting buildings of the monastery which no visitor should fail to see. It is difficult to ascertain the original function of the refectory, — was it used as a chapel, or a pilgrims' hospice ? A long vaulted room (17 metres long and 5 metres wide) with a table in the centre, the refectory has served for centuries as the dining room for the monks and the medieval pilgrims. It is said, that here the monks used to wash the feet of those who, forsaking all comfort and security, ventured into the Desert of Sinai.

An altar is situated in the eastern niche of the room. The walls of the refectory are adorned with numerous wall-paintings. The eastern wall shows the famous painting of the Last Judgement (1573). In addition, there are the icons of the Mystical Supper and the Head of Christ. The wall-paintings on the north, south and west-walls have been recently executed by Fr. Pachomius and represent :

North wall : St. John Climacus, St. John of Athos, a hegoumenos, St. Anastasius Sinaitis, St. Melos Sinaitis, St. Longinus and St. Theophilus ,St. Athanasius, St. Alexis of Moscow, Aaron, the Burning Bush, St. Theodorus, St. Stephanus, and St. Catherine.

South wall : Moses, the Holy Virgin, St. Catherine, St. Polycarp, St. Elijah, St. Porphyrius, St. Gregorius, St. Basil, St. Chrysostomus, St. Antony, St. Pachomius, St. Macarius, St. Episteme, St. Gallaction, St. Metrophanes, St. Gerasimus, St. Antony, St. Sabas, St. Euphemius, St. Theodosius and six paintings representing events in the Life of Christ.

West wall : St. Zosimus, St. Nicholas, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Spyridon and St. Gregory of Nyssa.

Visitors ought to notice the many coats-of-arms which the mediaeval pilgrims scratched and engraved on the door-frames and arcades of the refectory.

On the outside frame of the refectory door are seven coats-of-arms, while the inside frame shows five coats-of-arms. The outside window frame has six, the inside window frame three coats-of-arms. In addition, the refectory table as well as the arcades are engraved with numerous graffiti and coats-of-arms. Most of the graffiti belong to the 15th century. For a study on the heraldic engravings, the visitor is advised to consult M. H.L. Rabino, *Le Monastère de Sainte-Catherine du Mont Sinai,* Cairo, 1938.

THE LIBRARY

The new library is situated on the third floor of the central building and occupies a large hall which is about 60 metres long and 15 metres wide. Visitors should make arrangements in advance with the librarian to see the library. In order to be admitted and to use the library, the student ought to be in possession of a letter of permission issued by the Archbishop. It is now estimated, that the library contains approximately 2,250 Greek codices, and the Arabic manuscripts may number about 600. In addition, there are several hundred manuscripts in Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Coptic and Geez. The most important manuscript of the library was the *Codex Sinaiticus* which Konstantin von Tischendorf discovered when he visited the monastery in 1844, 1853 and 1859.

After his first visit, several leaves of the *MS,* were taken to Leipzig where they gained fame as the Codex Frederico-Augustanus. The greater part, Tischendorf acquired on his last journey. This was presented to Alexander II, Emperor of Russia, and kept in St. Petersburg. On order of the Russian Emperor, the codex was

beautifully reproduced, and a copy was sent to the monastery library. In 1933, the Russian Government sold the *Codex Sinaiticus* to the British Museum for the enormous sum of 100,000 Pounds Sterling. The codex contains the New Testament with the apocryphal books of *Pastor Hermae* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*. In addition, it contains most books of the Old Testament. Among the 4th century codices, the *Vaticanus* and the *Alexandrinus*, the great value of the *Sinaiticus* lies in its completeness, its consistency and its good « hand ».

The Codex Syriacus is a 5th century palimpsest and contains under a Syriac hagiographical text portions of one of the most ancient versions of the New Testament. The codex is exhibited. In addition, there is the famous *Book of the Gospels* which dates from the time of Theodosius III (8th century), written in two columns in gold uncials.

The library is also famous for its large number of (approximately 200) firmans which were issued by the Sultans and Caliphs in which they promised the protection of the monastery. Apart from the alleged firman of the Prophet, the monastery library contains many genuine firmans from the beginning of the 12th to the 19th century.

The eastern wing of the library is occupied by the monastery museum, where some of the unique treasures of the monastery are exhibited. The visitor should notice the beautiful icon collection, book-covers, chalices and gold and silver ecclesiastical utensils. It is permitted to take pictures in the museum.

THE CHARNEL HOUSE

The charnel house is situated in the monastery garden north-west of the monastery. The lower portion of the building is occupied by the ossuary or bone-house, whereas the first floor is occupied by the Chapel of St. Tryphon.

As one enters the ossuary, one notices on the left hand

the skeleton of St. Stephen the Porter (580 A.D.) who sits in full priestly vestments of purple velvet with his staff in hand in the same attitude in which he used to sit at the gate on Mount Moses examining the pilgrims as to their spiritual state.

On the right hand are the bones of the archbishops and martyrs which are placed in open wooden coffins. The bones of the monks are piled from the floor almost to the ceiling in two heaps, one for the skulls, the other for the arms and legs. There is an additional pile for the hands and the feet.

On the north side of the charnel house there is a small garden, large enough for six graves. Here the deceased monks are buried until the perishable parts have returned to dust. Whenever a monk dies, the bones of him who has been buried for the longest period are removed from the garden and placed into the ossuary.

THE GABAL MUSA OR THE MOUNTAIN OF MOSES (2244 metres)

The Gabal Mûsâ is situated about 2 km. south of the Monastery of St. Catherine, yet the ascent to the mountain occupies between two to three hours. The mountain is not a single peak, but is an almost isolated block about 3 km. long and one and a half km. wide with its longest dimensions extending from the south-east to the north-west.

To climb the summit of Gabal Mûsâ, pilgrims ought to start at an early hour when the air is still cool and refreshing. There are five different paths which lead to the summit.

a) The Path of Jethro (Sikket Shu'aib) contains only the faintest traces of a path leading through very rocky ravines. The path ascends from a site near the ruined barracks in the Wâdî al-Dair, and reaches the summit basin behind Râs al-Safsâf after climbing about 500 metres.

b) Another path ascends the western cliffs of Gabal Mûsâ to the summit from a point about two-thirds of the way up Wâdî al-Shaikh. This is a very windy track and, according to an early tradition, this path was used by Moses.

c) A third path, less rocky and precipitous than the former, ascends from the Monastery of the Forty Martyrs in the Wâdî al-Leja, south-west of the Gabal Mûsâ. This path may have been constructed for the use of pilgrims descending from Gabal Mûsâ on their way to the Monastery of the Forty Martyrs and then ascending the Gabal Katerin.

d) The Sikket al-Basha is one of the better known paths. This path, which ascends from the Wâdî al-Dair, winds in long zig-zag up to the south-eastern face of the Gabal Mûsâ and comes to a sudden end near the Plain of the Cypress, at a point a little above the Chapel of Elijah. For the most part this path is in fair condition, and it is frequently used by pilgrims riding camels in ascending the mountain.

This road was begun by 'Abbâs Pasha, who intended to construct for himself a villa on Gabal Mûsâ (1853).

e) The most familiar route, however, is the Sikket Saidna Mûsâ, the Path of our Lord Moses. Those who ascend the Gabal Mûsâ by the pilgrims' steps leave the Monastery of St. Catherine by a small side-gate in its west wall. The path commences immediately behind the monastery in a southerly direction.

According to tradition, this path was constructed by the Empress Helena. Yet, it is more likely, that the path was built in the 6th or 7th century for the use of the pilgrims.

Following this road, the pilgrim reaches after about 20 minutes a small spring which contains the same quantity of water in summer and in winter.

According to tradition, this « Spring of Moses » is the well where Moses watered the flocks of Jethro, which the Arabs call Shu'aib. The tradition of the monks state that the water issued from the rock in answer to the prayers of St. Sangarius, a hermit who had withdrawn to the wilderness. Moreover, the water is considered to have therapeutical qualities, especially for eye diseases.

After ascending the mountain for another 15 to 20 minutes, one reaches the Chapel of the Holy Virgin which is always locked, except on the days when the monks celebrate the Divine Liturgy there.

The chapel was built in commemoration of the miraculous extirpation of fleas in the monastery. The monks, so terribly plagued with vermin, determined to leave the monastery. Moreover, they had suffered from lack of food. So they ascended the holy mountain in procession with the intention to desert their holy places in the monastery. On the way, however, at the site of the chapel, the Holy Virgin appeared to them, promising to deliver them from their tormentors. The Holy Virgin ordered the monks to return to their monastery, and when they arrived, they found 100 camels laden with provisions waiting for them and not a single flea in the monastery.

A further ascent leads us to the Gate of St. Stephen the Porter (6th cent).

Monks, of whom St. Stephen the Porter was the most famous, used to be stationed here for the purpose of obtaining from the pilgrims who wished to receive the Holy Sacrament on Mount Moses a certificate that they had made their confession in the monastery. At the first gate they were handed a receipt, which they presented at the second gate. St. Stephen still sits at the entrance to the charnel house, his skeleton dressed with a purple robe.

The second gate leads to a little tableland, which is the only stretch of level ground on the way up to the summit.

This pleasant green plain, known as the « Plain of the Cypress », received its name from a gigantic cypress which rises in the middle of it. In addition to this one large cypress, which according to tradition is over 500 years old there are six smaller cypresses and an olive tree. To the south of the cypress rises the summit of Gabal Mûsâ, and further away to the south-west, towers the lofty Gabal Katerin. Turning to the left of the cypress and continuing the ascent, one reaches a small plateau which unites the cypress plain with the Gabal Mûsâ. On the left side of the path is a simple white stone building containing the chapels of Elijah and Elisha.

The white-washed interior contains a hollow which is considered to be the cavern in which Elijah concealed himself after he had slain the priests of Baal and had wandered 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness (*I Kings* XIX, 11 f.). The chapel is opened once a year for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Not far away, there is also a small cell which was built in 1923.

From Elijah's Chapel, a further flight of steps leads to the summit peak passing by the stone which marks the traditional site where Moses stood when the Lord came down to Mount Sinai and called the prophet, to ascend to the top of the mountain (*Exodus* XIX, 20). The higher one ascends the greater is the apparent disorder and confusion while not a blade of grass nor a trace of vegetation is to be seen.

Below the summit of Gabal Mûsâ, a natural hollow in the granite is pointed out by the Arabs (to the left of the path) as a footprint of the camel upon which Muhammad rode on his visit to Mount Sinai, prior to his call.

Another tradition says that it is the footprint of Nabî Saleh's camel that is buried in the Wâdî al-Shaikh. The Bedouin girls, when leading their flocks on this mountain, will often milk their goats into the hollow believing this to be a sure means of obtaining wealth and prosperity.

On the final climb, one notices on the right hand the grave (1927) of an American pilgrim, who after climbing the mountain died from a heart-attack and was buried on the site. A few more steps, and one finally reaches the summit of Gabal Mûsâ. On the small plateau at the top, to the left, partly built on a foundation of an ancient basilica, is situated a small and simple chapel, which is dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

At one time, a basilica covered the whole summit, and 15th century pilgrims mention the church adorned with beautiful bronze doors and marble pillars. According to tradition, the chapel is built on the site where Moses received the Decalogue. The chapel, which was constructed between 1934 and 1937, is decorated with many beautiful icons. On the north wall are the icons of the Crucifixion, Aaron, the Crossing of the Red Sea, Moses receiving the Decalogue and St. Catherine. On the south wall : St. Catherine, Moses striking the rock, St. Elijah, Moses and the serpent. The apse is adorned with paintings of the Twelve Apostles and an icon of the Holy Trinity. The visitor ought to notice the old wooden door of the chapel.

On the right, there rises a small mosque which the Arabs greatly revere.

Following the mûlid of Nabî Saleh in the Wâdî al-Shaikh, the Arabs ascend the mountain and sacrifice sheep here. Notice the blood-stained doorposts of the mosque.

North-east of the chapel, and behind a barbed wire fence is a low cavern formed by a natural fissure which extends for about 2 metres into the mountain. It is so low and narrow that only a thin person can get through without turning sideways. Here Moses is said to have stood when the « Glory of the Lord passed by », and the monks show the impression of Moses' head and shoulders on the stone.

The tradition is that Moses remained fasting for forty days in the cave while « writing » the Decalogue.

The view from Gabal Mûsâ is most imposing. Towards the south-west rise the Gabal Zebir and the Gabal Katerin, the highest mountain of the peninsula. To the south-east, one looks over the Seba'iyeh Valley, near the foot of Gabal Mûsa which is believed by some to be the camping place of the Israelites. Towards the east, the Gabal al-Me'allawi is especially conspicuous.

THE RAS AL-SAFSAF

Some authorities claim that the mountain where the Commandments were given was the Râs al-Safsâf. Descending from Gabal Mûsâ, one reaches after about 20 minutes the Plain of the Cypress. The guide will take the pilgrim hence to the Chapel of St. John the Baptist where there are also the remains of a cistern. Proceeding in north-easterly direction, one approaches the Chapel of the Sacred Girdle of the Holy Virgin. Nearby is a spring and the venerable willow which gives its name to the mountain. According to tradition, Moses is said to have cut his miraculous staff from this tree. The ascent to the Râs al-Safsâf, though at first facilitated by steps, eventually becomes steeper and steeper and should only be attempted by those who are experienced in mountain-climbing.

THE GABAL KATERIN OR THE MOUNTAIN OF St. CATHERINE (2646 metres)

Those intending to climb the Gabal Katerin leave the Monastery of St. Catherine and proceed along the Wâdî al-Dair in the direction of the Plain of Raha which is situated north of the Râs al-Safsâf and north-west of the Monastery of St. Catherine.

There is no doubt, that this plain is sufficiently extensive to have been the camping ground of a large number of people like that of the Israelites. The Plain of Raha or the Wâdî al-Raha, the « Palm of the Hand » has received its name from the flat level character of the ridge. It is a valley which is flanked on both sides by masses of granite. Looking upon the plain from the

walls of the monastery is one of the most unforgettable impressions which the visitor can acquire, indeed, it is one of the most imposing and conspicuous features of this majestic landscape.

Before entering the Wâdî al-Leja from the Plain of Raha, the site is usually shown where the earth is supposed to have swallowed up the company of Korah (*Numbers* XXVI : 10). A hole in the rock is also pointed out as the mound of the Golden Calf.

The Leja Valley owes its name to an Arab tradition according to which Lejah was a daughter of Jethro and a sister of Zipporah.

At the entrance of the Leja Valley on the right are the Chapels of the Unmercenary Saints and the Holy Apostles. On the left is the ruinous Chapel of the Holy Virgin (al-Bustân) with a few plantations. After a pleasant walk of approximately 30 minutes, one reaches the Dair al-Arba'în or the Monastery of the Forty Martyrs.

The Monastery of the Forty Martyrs has an extensive garden with olive and other fruit trees. In the upper part of the monastery-garden there rises a spring with a cave near it, which is said to have been occupied by St. Onuphrius. The monastery owes its name to the Forty Martyrs who were slain by the Blemmyes, and whose martyrdom is described by Amonius and Nilus. The monastery was inhabited by monks until the middle of the 17th century. Only a few monks reside there now occasionally. — The monastery, which has two storeys, includes in the western and northern part twelve cells. The Chapel of the Forty Martyrs is interesting because of its tessellated floor. The icons are almost exclusively 19th century prints representing, SS. Cosmas and Damian, St. Nicholas, St. Ananias, the Baptism of Christ, the Annunciation, St. George, the Holy Virgin, St. Catherine, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, St. Paul, St. John the Baptist, St. Michael, and the Kouvouklion. About six metres west of the church is the monastery well.

South-west of the Gabal Mûsâ is situated the Gabal Katerin, so called because of the tradition which says that the

body of St. Catherine was brought hither from Alexandria by angels. From the Monastery of the Forty Martyrs, one can climb the mountain either on foot or by camel, though one will always have to descend from the mountain on foot. The path has been constructed by Fr. Callistus of Kerasunde and by Fr. Moses who, at the age of 92, died in 1953. From the Monastery of the Forty Martyrs one proceeds in south-westerly direction to the Bîr al-Shunnar or the « partridges well », which God is said to have called forth for behoove of the partridges which followed the relics of St. Catherine when borne to the summit by the angels. The road continues to be very steep and fatiguing until one reaches the ridge of rocks which leads to the summit. Pilgrims have indicated the direction of the path by heaping up small pyramids of stones. The Gabal Katerin has altogether three peaks : the Gabal Katerin, the Gabal Zebir, and the Gabal Rumail. The summit of Gabal Katerin is a huge naked block of granite descending somewhat steeply on all sides. Approximately half of the narrow plateau is occupied by a small chapel dedicated to St. Catherine.

Of St. Catherine, history has little to relate. According to the tradition recorded in the Roman martyrology, St. Catherine upbraided Maxentius, the Roman Emperor, for his cruelties and demanded from him to give up the worship of the idols. The Emperor, unable to defend himself, sent for pagan philosophers to argue with her, but St. Catherine refuted their arguments. Maxentius ordered her to be broken on the wheel, but the wheel was shattered by her touch. Thereupon, the Emperor ordered her to be beheaded. The martyr's relics were borne by angels to the Gabal Katerin, where, four centuries later, monks of the monastery discovered them and translated them to the monastery.

The altar of the Chapel of St. Catherine stands above the stone upon which, according to tradition, the angels placed the relics of the Alexandrian Virgin-Martyr. The apse is adorned with wall paintings of the Holy Virgin and Christ. The chapel is decorated with icons representing St. Michael, St. Spyridon, St. John of Damascus, St. Catherine, St. Callistus, the Translation of the Holy Relics of St. Catherine. Visitors should not

step upon the bare rock in the southern part of the chapel, as this rock is venerated by the monks as having been blessed by the holy relics of St. Catherine. The unevenness of the floor is explained by the monks to be due to the miraculous impression of the relics of St. Catherine, which were discovered in the early Middle Ages by the monks of the Monastery of the Transfiguration. Accordingly, it was after the discovery of the relics and their translation to the Church of the Transfiguration, that the monastery was identified with the Alexandrian Virgin-Saint. The size of the chapel is approximately 8 metres by 3 metres. West of the chapel is a small room. An additional room with four wooden beds is situated south of the chapel. There is also a small kitchen.

From the Gabal Katerin, the greater part of the Gulf of Aqaba is visible, and the Gulf of Suez can be surveyed as far as the African coast.

THE DAIR FUKARA AND THE CAVE OF St. JOHN CLIMACUS

The pilgrim who is interested in visiting these two sites which are situated in the Wâdî et-La'a is strongly advised to ask the camel-drivers around the monastery for guidance. The monks may not know the location of these sites, which, at one time, however, were famous pilgrimage centres.

It is advisable to set out from the monastery as early as possible either on foot or on camel, and proceed through the Wâdî al-Dair, passing the Chapel of the Holy Apostles to the Dair Fukara of which only the ruins are visible. The ruins of the monastery, which are situated close to a small brook, must date to an early period. Apparently, the monastery had collapsed. From there, about one kilometre along a narrow wâdî path, one reaches the famous St. John's Bread Tree (carob-tree) in the vicinity of which St. John Climacus had lived. This site presents itself as a pleasant picnic ground. The cave is within 10 minutes of the carob-tree and can be reached without much difficulty, provided one has a camel-driver along who knows the way to the cave.

The cave was inhabited by St. John Climacus (525-600 A.D.) who is also known as St. John Scholasticus or Sinaitis. After having spent forty years in this cave, he was elected hegoumenos of the monastery. Tradition states that at the time of his appointment, even Moses was present to show his respect and reverence to the new law-giver of the ascetic life. His vita has been written by Daniel, a monk of the monastery at Tor. St. John derives his name Climax or Climacus from his work of the same name *Climax tou Paradeisou* or the Ladder to Paradise, which deals with the vices and temptations which hinder the attainment of Christian holiness.

The cave is about 5 metres by 5 metres with an entrance 80 cm. by 60 cm. Apart from the light shining through the entrance, the cave is completely dark. The graffiti on the ceiling are all of recent date.

THE DEPENDENCY OF THE MONASTERY OF St. CATHERINE AT TOR

Tor, situated on the western coast of the southern part of the Sinai peninsula, is known to-day as a famous quarantine station for the Mecca pilgrims. The first church of Tor dates back to the same period as the Chapel of the Burning Bush at Mount Sinai, the first half of the 4th century. Known as Raithou, Tor is the site of the martyrdom of the Forty Monks of Raithou who were slain by the Blemmyes, an event which is recorded by the Egyptian monk Amonius and commemorated by the monks of the Monastery of St. Catherine.

The Church of St. George at Tor was built in 1878, and is part of the Dependency of the Monastery of St. Catherine. South of the church, is the archiepiscopal residence and some stores, whereas the cells of the monks are situated west of the church. Next to the cells is the old school, which was discontinued, however, in 1951. The Church of St. George serves the small Christian constituency of Tor. The church is a bright building with three large windows in the north and the south walls, which otherwise are adorned with approximately fifty icons. The iconostasis with its three rows of icons is noteworthy.

Lit. : Ahmed Chéfik, *Mémoires d'une visite au Monastère du Mont-Sinaï et d'une tournée d'inspection en automobiles dans la Péninsule du Sinaï en Janvier 1926.* Cairo, 1926.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Both the conditions and the means of visiting the sites of the Monastery of Sainte Catherine, its environs, and its dependencies described here by Dr. Meinardus are those that prevail in normal circumstances. Since 1967, however, the portion of Sinai where these sites are located has been under continuous military occupation and has therefore been inaccessible by normal means. At the date of this publication there is likewise no reliable report available as to the sites themselves or their current conditions.

CHAPTER XXVII

NOTES ON THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN EGYPT

1. — THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH IN EGYPT

As a result of the Oecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., the Monophysites of Egypt appointed their own Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria. On the other hand, the Byzantines consecrated a successor to Dioscorus, who had been deposed by the Council, and thus it comes about that there are two lines of Popes and Patriarchs of Alexandria, one Monophysite and the other Chalcedonian or Melkite.

When Egypt was conquered by the Arabs in 641 A.D., the Chalcedonian or Melkite Patriarch Peter III, seeing that the country was definitely lost to the Byzantine Empire, retired to Constantinople. On his death, the Greek Orthodox or Melkite Church of Alexandria remained without a Patriarch for some seventy years. During this period, however, administrators of the Patriarchal Throne of Alexandria were appointed, though they resided most of the time in Constantinople.

In 727 A.D., however, a Greek Orthodox Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria was elected, who was called Cosmas I. This Patriarch managed to recover for the Greek Orhodox of Alexandria the « Great Church » (Caesareum) and the Church called « Angelion ». From this time onwards, there has been a more or less regular succession of Greek Orthodox or Melkite Patriarchs of Alexandria resident in Egypt.

At the present time, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria comprises twelve Metropolitans, one Bishop and one titular Metropolitan. The Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa is H.B. Nicholas VI.

THE METROPOLITAN SEES

Leontopolis (Ismailia), Egypt, H.B. Nicodemus.

Nubia (Khartum), Sudan, H.B. Synesius.

Carthage (Tripolis), Libya, H.B. Parthenius.

Central Africa (Lubumbashi), Zaire, H.B. Timotheus.

Accra (Yaounde), Camerun, H.B. Trineus.

Pelusium (Port Said), Egypt, H.B. Barnabas.

Hermoupolis (Tanta), Egypt, H.B. Paul.

Ioannoupolis (Johannesburg), South Africa, H.B. Paul.

Rhodesia (Salisbury), H.B. Cyril.

Cape of Good Hope (Cape Town), South Africa, H.B. Paul.

Axum (Addis Ababa), Ethiopia, H.B. Methodius.

Eirenopolis (Dar as-Salam), Tanzania, H.B. Frumentius.

Bishopric : Memphis (Cairo), Egypt, H.B. Dionysius.

Monasteries

St. Sabas (Alexandria), St. Nicholas (Cairo), St. George (Cairo) St. Nicholas (Rosetta).

In Alexandria the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate maintains the following institutions :

The Patriarchal Library, the Institute of Oriental Studies, Catechetical Schools, and Philanthropical Societies.

In Cairo the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate maintains several schools, a Home for the Aged, a Philanthropic Society and the Orthodox Confraternity of Youth.

It also publishes a monthly periodical called « Pantainos » which is the official organ of the Patriarchate.

The Ecclesiastical Proclamation which is addressed to the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria at Pontifical Divine Liturgies is as follows :

> To N. the Most Blessed, Most Divine and All-Holy, our Father and Chief Shepherd, Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria, of Libya, the Pentapolis, Ethiopia and all the Land of Egypt : Father of fathers, Shepherd of shepherds, Highpriest of highpriests, Thirteenth Apostle and Judge of all the Earth, Many Years !

The once numerous and influential Greek Community of Egypt has now been considerably reduced through the exodus of large numbers of Greeks to other countries. The present number of Greeks now residing in Egypt is about 15,000.

According to the official statistics for 1969 furnished in the *Hêmerologian Ekklêsias Alexandreias* 1970, there were for Egypt :

Baptisms : 59, Marriages : 34, Burials : 175.

In addition to the Greeks of the Greek Orthodox Church in Egypt, there exists a sizeable Arabophone Community. The Arabophone elements in the Greek Orthodox Church may be traced to the 10th century, when 'Abd al-Masîh al-Halabî of Aleppo, Syria, was consecrated as Patriarch Christodoulus of Alexandria. Whereas the Arabophone Community (Arabic speaking Greek Orthodox) increased in Syria and in Palestine, it remained relatively small in Egypt. To be correct, it is only after the Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire (1832), that we can speak of a distinct Arabophone Greek Orthodox Community. Proud of their liberty from the Ottoman Government, also the Greeks in Egypt acquired a profound sense of nationalism, and consequently identified themselves as Europeans rather than as citizens of the Ottoman Empire.

The consequences were the establishment and building of separate Arabophone Greek Orthodox churches in Cairo, Alexandria, Tanta, Mansûra, and Port Said, and the adoption of a distinct title, be it « Arab Greek Orthodox » or « Syrian Greek Orthodox ». Serious tensions between the Greek Orthodox Community and the Arabophone Greek Orthodox Community emerged in 1925 following the death of Photius II, when the Arabophone Michael Lutfallah pressed for the election of an Arabophone to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria. The Arabophone demands for greater representation and participation in the Patriarchate of Alexandria were repeated during the ensuing patriarchates of Meletius (1932), Nicholas (1936) and Christophorus II (1939).

To-day, while Greek continues to be dominant in most congregations, the number of those changing over to Arabic is growing. Egyptian born Metropolitan Paul of Tanta is the only top-ranking Greek Orthodox prelate who is fluent in Arabic. His recent elevation to his present office brought widespread satisfaction to the advocates of this change.

2. — THE ARMENIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN EGYPT

Ever since the days of the Byzantine rule in Egypt, Armenians held important administrative positions in Egypt, as well as in the other parts of the Empire. Thus, during the reign of the Emperor Justinian (527-565 A.D.), an Armenian General, Nerseh Pasentzi, is reported to have conquered parts of Africa. In 545 A.D., the Emperor sent an army to Libya, which was composed largely of Armenian soldiers, under the leadership of Ardavane Arshagouni, who was accompanied by Vahan, his brother, Krikor, his nephew, and Arshadir, his relative. Later, the Emperor Justinian raised Ardavane to the rank of Governor of Libya and Duke of Africa. During this period, many Armenians came to Egypt, where subsequently they built many churches. In 553

A.D., when the Emperor persecuted the Armenian Church in Jerusalem, forcing them to accept the Chalcedonian Creed, many Armenians left Jerusalem, and settled in Egypt.

'Amr ibn al-'As, after conquering Egypt in 641 A.D., built Fustât near the site of the ancient Babylon. In this work he was assisted by his friend Vartan al-Rûmî. After 'Amr's death, Vartan was appointed chief tax-collector.

During the Fatimid period, the Armenian community in Egypt spread from one part of the country to the other, and many Armenian churches were built throughout the Nile Valley. In Cairo, there was a gate called Bâb al-Arman. According to Abû Sâlih and al-Maqrîzî, the Armenians had thirty-five churches and monasteries in Egypt. There were, for example, the Church of the Holy Virgin in the Hârat Zuwaila. This church formerly belonged to the Melkites. In 1076, however, Badr al-Gamâli the powerful Head of the Fatimid Government who was Armenian by origin, gave it to the Armenians on the occasion of the visit of Gregory II, the Catholicus of Armenia, to Egypt. The Church of St. George of the Dair al-Khandaq belonged to the Copts. It was, however, in ruin, when about 1084, on the demand of the Archbishop Gregory, Badr al-Gamâli gave it to the Armenians, who rebuilt it. In 1168, the Church of St. James at al-Basâtîn was rebuilt. The Church of St. George at Dûra, near al-Basâtîn, which belonged to the Copts, was given to the Armenians, when they increased in numbers. The Armenians demolished this church, and instead rebuilt a larger church with a belfry and high walls around it. The church of St. Gregory was near the Church of St. George at Dûra. In 1164 it was in the possession of the Armenians, though by 1204, the Copts acquired it. The Church of St. George at Gizah was also a large and important church, in which the Armenians owned property. Near Girga, the Armenians owned the Church of St. George and in al-Qâs'a, north of Asyût, they owned a monastery and two churches. Armenian monks also inhabited the White Monastery near Sohâg.

During the rule of the Ayyubids, the Armenians were persecuted, because of their alliance to the Fatimids, and the Armenian army was distanded by the Sultan Salâh al-Dîn. During this period, several Armenian churches were acquired by the Copts, though some of them were later returned to the Armenians.

During the reign of the Mameluks, the Armenian influence declined, and many churches were destroyed in 1322 and again in 1389. By 1517, for example, there were no Armenians in Alexandria, though Armenians and Turks lived in the Khan al-Khalîlî, where they worked as goldsmiths and jewellers.

The rule of Muhammad 'Ali was more favourable to the Armenians. He surrounded himself with many Armenians, some of them served also as members of the Egyptian Cabinet, and we hear of men like Boghos Bey Yousoufian, Garabed Noubarian, Artin Bey Cherakian, Arisdages Altoune Duri, Khosrov Cherakian and Arakel Bey Noubar. After the death of Muhammad 'Alî, Armenians continued to serve in the Egyptian Government, the most prominent of whom were Yousouf Artin Bey, Tito Pasha Hakikian, Yeghiazar Amira, Artin Bey Cherakian, Stephen Bey Demirdhian. Nubar Pasha served from 1866 to 1888 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and held the office of prime minister twice.

Some of the more outstanding Armenian prelates in Egypt were the followng archbishops : Gabriel (1830-1867), Meguerditch (1864-1866), Mesrob (1867-1879), Mattaus (1886-1890), Hagop (1897-1899), Hovsep (1900-1904), Meguerditch (1905-1912), Jorghom (1914-1931).

From 1950 onwards, the size of the Armenian community has declined from some 40,000 to about 15,000, owing to large-scale emigration, mostly to the Soviet Union. They have two daily newspapers and three weekly magazines. One of the first printing-presses in Egypt was established in 1865 by Abraham Mouradian, who, in co-operation with Bishop Meguerditch Kefsizian published a newspaper called « Armaveni ». Later on, Fr. Ghevont Papazian and Vahan

Mamourian and Andon Reshdouni, published the weekly newspaper « Neghos ».

The Armenian churches in Egypt belong to the Patriarchate of Echmiadzin. The head of the Armenian Church in Egypt is the Archibishop, who is elected by the combined vote of the twenty-four members of the Legislative Council in Cairo, and a corresponding Legislative Council in Alexandria. The present head of the Armenian Orthodox Church in Egypt is Archbishop Zazen Chinchinian, who resides mainly in Alexandria, although the Patriarchal Cathedral is in Cairo.

Within the Armenian community in Egypt there exist since the end of the 19th century two major parties, the 'Tashnagtsagan' (The Federalists or the A.R.F., Armenian Revolutionary Federation), and the 'Ramgavar', the Democrats.

3. — THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN EGYPT

The relationship of the Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church to the Egyptian Church was for the most part one of cordiality and friendship. The practice of sending synodical letters from the Patriarch of Alexandria to the Patriarch of Antioch is first mentioned to have taken place in the middle of the third century, when Dionysius the Wise, 14th Patriarch of Alexandria, (247-264 A.D.) sent a letter to Fabius, Patriarch of Antioch, informing him of the stories of the martyrs, who suffered in Alexandria under the terror of Decius. The relationship between the Sees increased in cordiality following the acceptance of the Monophysite doctrines by the Syrian Christians. True, for a hundred years after the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.), there had been a constant contention between the Dyophysites and the Monophysites, and the Patriarch of Antioch belonged sometimes to one party, sometimes to the other party. Best known of the Monophysite patriarchs was Severus, who occupied the See from 512-518 A.D., when he was compelled

to seek refuge in Alexandria. Most influential in the formation of the Monophysite See of Antioch was James (Jacob), who was consecrated in secret by Theodosius I, Patriarch of Alexandria, in 536 A.D. He was given a roving commission to consecrate and organize a Monophysite hierarchy. From the 6th century onwards, one of the duties of the newly consecrated patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch was to send synodical messages to each other, thus re-affirming their doctrinal allegiance. And though the attempt was made by Damian, the 35th Patriarch of Alexandria, (569-605 A.D.), to establish Alexandria as a kind of « monophysite papacy », the dream was never realized. On the contrary, the theological leadership within Monophysitism passed at a very early date into the hands of the Antiochenes, where it has remained ever since.

Apart from a small number of Syrians who came to Egypt in the third and fourth centuries, a Syrian colony of some importance emerged in the 7th century in and around Alexandria, and Syrian monks engaged in scholarly pursuits at the Ennaton. Among them was Thomas of Harkel, who revised the Syriac version of the Bible from Greek manuscripts. In 616 A.D., we even hear of a divine service at the Ennaton, in which both the Alexandrian and the Antiochene patriarchs participated. For the emergence of Syrian monasticism in Egypt, see : The Monastery of the Syrians in the Wâdî al-Natrûn.

The Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) communities in Cairo and Alexandria are very small, numbering no more than 200. The head of the Syrian Orthodox community is Bishop Severus Hara.

4. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EGYPT

A. *The Armenian Community*

The first serious attempts to unite the Armenian Church with the Latin Church were begun in the 12th century by Pope Eugenius III (1145-1153). Two Councils held at Sis

(1204) promulgated eight canons ; later twenty-five canons were enacted which laid down the requirements of union. Yet, it was not until the 17th and 18th century, through the work of the Capuchins, that a substantial part of the Armenian Church was united with Rome. In 1701, the first beginnings of an Armenian Catholic congregation were made by Peter Manuk in Constantinople, and Catholic monasticism received a further addition to its ranks in the Armenian Antinine monks of the Lebanon. An unbroken line of Armenian Catholic patriarchs dates from 1734. Peter Abraham I was recognized as Patriarch by Rome in 1742, and set up his residence in the Monastery of Korain, which in 1750 was changed to Bzommar. In 1867 the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate was removed to Constantinople, and a fter the First World War, the patriarch resided for several years in Rome. In 1928, however, the Patriarchate was transferred again to Bzommar near Beirut.

One of the first Armenian Catholic priests in Egypt was the Rev. Fr. Stephan Aywazian (1820-1837), and the first Armenian Catholic Bishop, the Most Rev. Paul Attarian, was consecrated in 1849. He was followed by Mgr. Barnabas Akchehirlian (1886-1898), Mgr. Paul Sabraghian (1901-1904), Mgr. Serope Davidian (1904-1908), Mgr. Peter Koyounian (1908-1911), Mgr. John Kouzian (1911-1933), Mgr. James Nessimian (1933-1960) and Mgr. Raphael Bayan (1962—).

During the reign of Muhammad 'Alî, Armenian Catholics had important positions in the Government. Khosrov Cherakian (1808-1873) served as Muhammad 'Alî's secretary and interpreter, Artin Bey Cherakian (1800-1859) was Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commerce.

Out of the total Armenian community in Egypt perhaps as many as 2,000 are Catholic. Serving as Vicar for Patriarch Ignatius Peter Batanian is Mgr. Raphael Bayan, whose offices are at 36 Sharia Sabrî Abû Alam in Cairo.

B. *The Chaldaean Community*

The name « Chaldaean » was first applied to the Catholics of the East-Syrian rite by Pope Eugenius IV (15th century).

According to tradition, the Chaldaean Church was founded by St. Thomas who, before he went to India, delegated his authority to SS. Addai and Mari. The first organizer of the Chaldaean or Persian Church was Papa Bar Aggai, Bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in the 3rd century. A Chaldaean patriarchate was estabished in the 5th century under Babai I (496-503 A.D.). Towards the end of the 5th century, the Chaldaean Church adopted the teachings of Nestorius and spread rapidly throughout the Orient as far as China and Tibet.

In the 8th century, there was a Nestorian Bishop in Egypt, while a large Nestorian community resided in Cyprus. The Nestorians of Cyprus united with the See of Rome in 1445. In 1553, John Sulaka was invested as the first patriarch of the Chaldaean Catholic Church by Pope Julius III.

The Chaldaean Catholic Patriarchate in Cairo was founded in 1891 by H.B. Elias XII Aboulyounan thanks to the gifts of Mme Helene al-Baghdadiah and Veuve Antoine Bey 'Abd al-Messîh of Baghdad.

In Egypt, its estimated 500 members derive from Iraqi immigrants. Mgr. Ephraem Bede heads this community as Vicar of His Beatitude Patriarch Paul II Cheikho.

C. *The Coptic Community*

The Coptic Community has as its head the « Patriarch of Alexandria for the Copts ». The patriarch resides at the Coptic Catholic patriarchate at Sharia Ibn Sandar, 34 Kubri al-Qubbah, Cairo.

The Coptic Catholic Church lists four dioceses in Egypt. The patriarchal diocese of Alexandria (residence in Cairo, Kubri al-Qubbah) with forty-two parishes, forty-four secular and twenty-seven regular priests and a community of about 30,000. The diocese of Hermopolis Magna (residence in Minya) with twenty-one parishes, nineteen secular and six regular priests and a community of about 20,000. The diocese of Lycopolis (residence in Asyût) with forty-five parishes, thirty secular and five regular priests and a community of about 25,000. And lastly the diocese of Thebes (residence in Sohâg) with forty parishes, twenty-seven secular and eleven regular priests and a community of about 25,000.

The Coptic Catholic Patriarch is His Beatitude Stephanus I, Cardinal Sidarus, the Bishop of Minya is H.B. Isaac Ghattas, the Bishop of Asyût is H.B. Hanna Nour, o.f.m., and the Bishop of Thebes is H.B. Andreas Ghattas.

The first approach towards union of the Coptic Orthodox Church with the Church of Rome was made in 1442, when John XI (1427-1451) sent John, Abbot of the Desert Monastery of St. Antony, to the Council of Florence as an observer. During the patriarchate of Gabriel VII (1525-1568), Pope Pius VI (1561) sent two Jesuits, Christopher Rodriguez and John Baptist Eliano, to negotiate with regard to the submission of the Coptic Church but in vain. The question was resumed in 1582 by the Patriarch John XIV.

In 1630, a Capuchin mission was established in Cairo, which, however, did not prosper. In 1636, Fr. Agathangelus went to the Monastery of St. Antony, where he stayed four months. Two of the fifteen Coptic monks became Catholics.

In 1741, Athanasius, the Coptic Bishop in Jerusalem, became Catholic. Pope Benedict XIV entrusted him with the Catholic Copts spread throughout Egypt, but Athanasius could not live in Egypt. In the 18th century, Raphael Tukhi of Girga edited and published Coptic liturgical books in Rome and became titular bishop of Arsinoë. In 1824, Maximus Joed was nominated Patriarch of Alexandria, but the nomination

was not put into effect. In 1854, Pope Pius IX appointed Athanasius Khusam as administrator of the Catholic Copts.

The Coptic Catholic Patriarchate of Alexandria was finally established in 1895 by the apostolic letter *Christi Domini*. In 1908, however, the Patriarch Cyril II Macarius resigned and the patriarchate remained vacant until the nomination of Patriarch Marcus Khuzam in 1947.

The Coptic Catholic Church maintains the Theological Seminary of St. Leo at Ma'âdi. Inaugurated in 1953 by H. E. Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, it is a beautiful and imposing structure built along the lines of modern Italian architecture with lodging facilities for 130 students.

The seminary was founded in 1899 at Tahta, and was moved from there to Tanta and finally to Ma'âdi.

D. *The Greek or Melkite Community*

The name « Melkites » or « king's men » was given by the Monophysites in the patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem to those who accepted the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.), thereby following the Emperor. Thus the term is equally applicable to the Orthodox, although custom now reserves the name for those Byzantines who have accepted the supremacy of the Church of Rome.

The Greek Catholic Church is divided into three patriarchates : Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem. The Greek Catholic Patriarchate in Egypt is situated at Sharia Linan Pasha, Faggalah.

The final rupture between the See of Rome and the See of Constantinople took place some time after 1054, and the main causes of the schism were jealousy of the primacy of Rome and the unchristian behaviour of the Crusaders (The conduct of the Venetians at the capture of Constantinople in 1204 is to this day recalled with loathing).

In 1773, Pope Clement XIV (1769-1774) gave the jurisdiction of the Melkites in the patriarchates of Jerusalem and Alexandria to the Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, but without granting any extension of title. This, however, was carried into effect by Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) in 1838, who as a personal favour to Maximus III (1833-1855) accorded the title of « Patriarch of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and all the East ». This title has been retained by his successors.

The first Vicar General of Egypt was Mgr. Basilius Khoury, who was consecrated in 1837. The Pro-Vicar of Cairo resides at the Greek Catholic Patriarchate in Faggalah. The Patriarchal Pro-Vicar of Alexandria resides at the Greek Catholic Patriarchate in Alexandria, Rue Girgis Tawîl.

There are eighteen Greek Catholic churches in Egypt, of which 10 churches are in Cairo, 4 churches in Alexandria, and one church each in Mansûra, in Tanta, in Port Said and in Damietta.

Numbering about 7,000, this community is made up largely of Egyptians, of Syrian, Lebanese or Palestinian origin. The head of this community is His Beatitude Patriarch Maximum Hakim V, who was born in Tanta, and who served as Archbishop of Galilee and Palestine from 1943 to 1967. His residence is divided between Damascus, Beirut, Cairo and Alexandria. The Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo, Alexandria and Mansûra is Mgr. Paul Antaki, who resides in Cairo.

E. *The Latin Community*

The history of the Latin Community goes back to the 13th century, when St. Francis of Assisi presented himself in 1219 to the Sultan of Egypt. Yet it was not until the 17th century, that the first Franciscan friars came to Egypt with the purpose of re-uniting the Coptic Orthodox Church to the See of Rome. In 1687, the *Congregatio Propaganda Fide* established a mission in Egypt independent of the Custody of the Holy Land. In 1762, the Latin Catholic Community in

Egypt was placed under the Apostolic Vicariate of Aleppo. In 1839, a separate vicariate of Egypt was instituted. In 1886, Lower Egypt (Nile Delta) was separated from the Apostolic Vicariate of Egypt and in 1909, it became the Apostolic Vicariate of the Nile Delta. In 1926, the Apostolic Vicariate of the Suez Canal which extended from Port Said to Suez was formed. This was discontinued, however, in 1956, and the parishes were annexed to the Custody of the Holy Land, Jerusalem. The Apostolic Vicariate of Alexandria is situated in Alexandria, Rue Sidi Metwalli ; the Apostolic Vicariate of Heliopolis is situated at Sharia Baghdad, Heliopolis, next to the Basilica.

The Apostolic Vicar of Alexandria is Mgr. Jean de Capistran Aimé Cayer, o.f.m., the Apostolic Vicar of Heliopolis is Mgr. Amand Hubert, S.M.A. The Latin Patriarchate of Alexandria, dating from the time of the Crusades, has never been more than a titular patriarchate, and as such it was suppressed by Pope Paul VI in 1964.

About 6,000 members make up the Latin community, which includes some Egyptians, but is largely foreign, especially Italian in nationality.

F. *The Maronite Community*

The Maronite Church considers as its founder St. Maron, who is thought to have died about 410 A.D. His disciples established the monastery of Beit-Marûn in his memory. The Maronites remained loyal to the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.), but adopted the heresy of Monothelitism (638 A.D.), which affirmed in Christ a single Will, without any confusion of the two natures. Thereby, it was held, they denied Christ's real and perfect humanity.

In the beginning, the Maronites lived in and around Beit-Marûn, later they spread to the valley of the Orontes, to Aleppo and to Antioch. In the 7th century, the Maronites abandoned Syria to settle in Lebanon. The Crusades brought

the Maronites into contact with the Western Church, and it is asserted that since the patriarchate of James of Hamlet (1439-1458) all Maronite patriarchs have been in union with the Latin Church.

Maronite churches are generally indistinguishable from Latin churches.

Maronite missionaries established themselves as early as 1745 in Damietta. In 1906, H.B. Joseph Derian became the first Maronite Vice-Patriarch for Egypt. The head of the Maronite community, numbering about 10,000, is Mgr. Joseph Merhi in his capacity as Vicar of His Beatitude Patriarch Paul al-Meouchi, who resides in the Lebanon.

G. *The Syrian Community*

The Church of Antioch, more vulnerable than any other of the Apostolic Churches, was divided in the 5th century into three mutually hostile camps : The Orthodox or Melkites, the Nestorians, and the Jacobites. The Catholics of the Syrian rite are converts from the Jacobites or their descendants.

In the 13th century, there were Jacobite bishops and patriarchs, e.g. Ignatius III, who abjured the Monophysite doctrine and admitted the supremacy of the Church of Rome, yet none of these declarations were either sincere or lasting. The Syrian Jacobites were present at the Council of Florence (1438-1445), though no practical consequences resulted out of the Council.

In the 17th century, the Capuchins reconciled many Jacobites in Aleppo to the Catholic Faith, and a Catholic bishop was appointed in 1656. In 1662, during the Pontificate of Gregory XIII, the Jacobite Patriarch Neeman submitted his church to the Roman See. In 1700, a Syrian Catholic patriarch was reinstated, but it was not until the Patriarchate of Ignatius Michael Jaroue (1783-1800), that the Syrian Catholic Community became solidly constituted.

In 1830, the Syrian Catholics received a firman from the Ottoman Government, enabling them to be independent of the Jacobites in civil matters, though it was not until 1843 that the Syrian Catholic Patriarch was recognized. The Syrian Catholic Patriarch Mar Philip Arkus attended the Vatican Council of 1870. The Syrian Catholic Patriarch, H.B. Ignatius Hayek, resides in Beirut.

In 1851, due to the zeal of Fr. André Tarazi and the generosity of Elie Daher and Faragalla Mussali, the first Syrian Catholic Church in Egypt was dedicated to St. Elias. In 1904, George Brahamsha built the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary at Sharia Ard al-Imamein. In 1928, Msgr. Sulien Behnam Kalian, Patriarchal Vicar, established the official residence of the Patriarchate. The Syrian Catholic Community in Alexandria obtained its church in 1930.

There are approximately 3,000 Syrian Catholics in Egypt, stemming from Syrian origins, but enjoying Egyptian nationality. Their head is Msgr. Basil Butrus Habra, who was born in Egypt. The community's main centre, comprising the Cathedral, the Patriarchate and the school, is located at 46 Sharia Zaher in Cairo.

H. *Catholic Orders and Congregations*

The following list enumerates the principal Catholic orders and congregations which are established in Egypt.

The Franciscans (O.F.M.) in Egypt belong either to the Custody of the Holy Land or to the Order Vicariate of the Holy Family. The Custody of the Holy Land, which displays its activity also in other parts of the Levant, has Lower Egypt as its sphere of activities. The Custody of the Holy Land has houses in Alexandria (8), Port Said, Ismailia, Damanhûr, Kafr al-Dawar, Kafr al-Zaiyât, Damietta and Cairo (4). It serves seventeen parishes and six chapels as well as numerous chapels of nunneries. In the region around Alex-

andria, the Custody of the Holy Land is engaged in mission work, known as the Oriental Mission of the Holy Land. At Kafr al-Dawâr, the Custody of the Holy Land operates a Preparatory Seminary. The Franciscan Centre for Christian Oriental Studies is at the Muski, Cairo. Moreover, they administer an orphanage, three schools and four kindergarten. Seven monks of the Custody of the Holy Land are Egyptians, the others come from various nations in the Middle East and the West.

The larger number of the fathers of the Order Vicariate of Upper Egypt are Copts. In their monasteries, the Coptic rite is followed. The Franciscans of the Order Vicariate have houses in Cairo (Daher, Mokattam and Gizah, the former being the residence of the Vicar, the latter being the major seminary), Fayyûm, Bani Suef, Maghâghah, Asyût, Dair Drunka, Manfalût, Nag' Hammadi, Qena, Denderah, Tawirât, Luxor, Farshût, Armant al-Waburat, Armant al-Hait, Esna, Kom Ombo. In addition to two Preparatory Seminaries, they operate a Senior Theological Seminary, sixteen parishes, eleven schools, four orphanages and two dispensaries.

The Friars Minor were founded by St. Francis of Assisi, who in 1219 presented himself as a missionary to the Sultan of Egypt. In 1322, the Franciscans accepted the custodianship of the Holy Land which included Egypt. The first Franciscan missionaries entered Egypt in the beginning of the 17th century, yet is was not until 1687 that Pope Innocent XI officially instituted the Franciscan Mission of Upper Egypt.

The Order of the Dominicans, founded by St. Dominic in 1215, established in 1928 the Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies in Cairo.

The Institute was founded at the suggestion of the Rev. Fr. Lagrange, the founder of the Biblical School in Jerusalem. It is situated at 1, Sh. Masna' al-Tarabiche in Abbasiyah.

> The purpose of the Institute is to provide a place of study for Dominican scholars in Cairo. Through the initiative of the Rev. Fr. Jaussen, who was both archaeologist and orientalist, the range of the Institute was considerably widened so as to make it a centre of scientific

studies in Egyptology, Arabic and Islamic studies. Since 1953 the Institute has been an autonomous institution with its own government.

The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) was founded in 1538 by St. Ignatius of Loyola and was approved in 1550. The Jesuits came to Egypt in the 18th century (1696-1744), but did not establish themselves permanently before 1879. The Jesuit College of the Holy Family at Bustan al-Maqsî in Faggalah was founded in 1879, the Petit College, Heliopolis, in 1933. The Jesuits also maintain a retreat-house and church at Matariya (1883), a residence at Cleopatra, Alexandria (1884), and a school at Minya (1887). In 1904 the Church of the Holy Family of Matariya was dedicated. A mission in Garagos near Luxor was opened in 1948.

The Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Carmelite Fathers), founded by St. Berthold (d. 1195), was reformed in the 16th century through the initiative of St. John of the Cross. The Carmelite Fathers came to Cairo in 1926. They maintain the Shrine of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus in Shûbra.

The Lazaristes or the Congregation of the Mission, founded in 1625 by St. Vincent de Paul and approved in 1632, maintain the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saba' Banât in Alexandria.

The Società di San Francesco di Sales was founded by St. John Bosco in 1841 and approved in 1869. The Salesian Fathers established themselves in 1896 in Alexandria, in 1924 in Port Said, and in 1925 in Cairo. They maintain especially professional schools. The Salesian Institute in Cairo is situated at 2, Sharia Abdel Kader Taha, Rod al-Farag.

The Society of the African Mission (S.M.A.) was founded in 1856. Their first establishment in Egypt was in 1877 in Zaqaziq (St. Joseph's) to be followed in 1878 in Tanta (St. Anne's), in 1890 in Mahallah al-Kubra (St. Augustine's) and in 1898 in Cairo where they serve the Basilica of Our Lady

(1913) or the Basilique d'Héliopolis at Sharia Baghdad, Heliopolis, the Cathedral of St. Mark at Sharia Be'sa, Shûbra, the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Sharia Selim al-Awal in Zaitûn, and the Chapel of St. Michael at Qubbah Gardens. They also have a mission in Mahallah al-Kubra (school of St. Augustine).

The Congregation of the Sons of the Sacred Heart of Verona founded by Msgr. Daniel Comboni in 1846 has been working in Egypt since 1867. In 1880 they built the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Cordi Jesu) at Sharia 'Abd al-Khalek Sarwat. They also maintain the Church of St. Joseph at Sharia Hasan Sabri, Zamalek and schools at Helwân and Aswân.

The Order of the Brothers of the Preaching of St. Mark was founded in cooperation with the Dominican Fathers by Msgr. Isaac Ghattas in 1959. The center of the Order is in Minya.

The Little Brothers of Jesus founded by Father Voillaume in 1933 in Algiers maintain a house in al-Munira in Cairo.

The Maronite Fathers of the Holy Virgin were founded by Msgr. Germanos Farhat in 1695 and approved in 1732. Their house in Cairo is in Midan Ahmed Helmy, Shûbra.

The Christian Brothers (Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes) were founded in 1680 by St. Jean Baptiste de La Salle. The Christian Brothers opened their first school in Alexandria in 1847. The College of St. Mark was inaugurated by King Fu'âd. They established the College of St. Joseph in Cairo (Koronfish) in 1860. Other schools are in Bab al-Lûq (1888), in Shûbra (1890), and in al-Zâhir (1898).

The following list enumerates the principal Catholic Congregations, Societies and Orders of Nuns which are established in Egypt.

The Daughters of the Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, founded in 1633 by St. Vincent de Paul, came to Egypt in 1844 to serve in the European Hospital in Alexandria. Other nuns operated a dispensary and an orphanage (St. Joseph at Muharram Bey in Alexandria). At present, the congregation has 25 sisters in Egypt, who maintain two schools in Alexandria, two schools in Cairo and two schools in Upper Egypt. They operate dispensaries in Alexandria, Cairo, Qûsîa and Sidfa, and kindergarten in Khoronfish and Helmiah in Cairo.

The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd founded by St. John Eudes in 1641. St. Marie Euphrasie established work in the Muskî in 1845 and an additional station in Shûbra in 1869. They maintain seven convents. The Maison Provinciale is situated at 121, Sharia Shûbra.

This congregation comprises 71 sisters, who are in Shûbra, and fifteen contemplative sisters of the Cross. They maintain a school with an English section (1,500 pupils) and a French section (700 pupils), as well as a Kindergarten and a Secondary School in Shûbra. In 1969, they opened a centre of professional training for young girls.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, founded in 1843, were called to Egypt in 1880 for the education of young women. They maintain the Pensionnat de Notre-Dame de Sion in Ramleh, Alexandria, and the College of Our Lady of Sion in Alexandria. They are 11 sisters.

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles was founded in 1876 by Augustin Planque. The sisters established themselves in Egypt in 1881. They maintain houses in Cairo and Alexandria, Tanta (1881), Zaqazîq (1882), Mahallah (1891), Shûbra (1894), Zaitûn (1896), Heliopolis (1927), Alexandria (1929), Mallawî (1930), Asyût (1934), Girga (1936). They have 137 sisters.

The Congregation of the Mother of God, founded in 1648 by Msgr. Oliver, came to Egypt in 1880 upon the request of

the Khedive Tawfik Pasha. They maintain two houses, one in Alexandria and one in Cairo. They have 33 sisters.

The Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo (German) founded in 1652 in Nancy, Lorraine, came to Egypt in 1884, where they engaged in educational and nursing activities. They maintain two schools in Cairo (Bab al-Lûq) and Alexandria, and a home for the aged. They have 55 sisters.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyons, founded in 1648 by Fr. Médaille, S.J., arrived in Egypt in 1907, where they took over the duties of the Sœurs des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie whom they replaced in Minya.

The Congregation of the Egyptian Sisters of the Sacred Heart, founded in 1913 by Mother Marie-Marguerite in Egypt, direct schools in Cairo, Bani Mazâr, Sohâg, Tahta, Suez.

The Filles de la Délivrance were founded in Martinique in 1868 by Mother Mary of the Divine Providence. In 1891 they came to Egypt, where Mother Mary St. Edmond established a centre in Faggalah. They operate a school and a boarding-school in Heliopolis and a dispensary in Port Said. In Cairo they have 11 sisters, in Heliopolis 14 sisters and in Port Said 7 sisters. Eleven of these sisters are Egyptian.

The Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Sorrows was founded in 1868 by Saint-Frai. The first sisters of this congregation arrived in Egypt in 1891. They are established in Heliopolis and Alexandria. They direct a home for the aged and a dispensary. They have 18 sisters.

The Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (The Mothers of the Sacred Heart) was founded in 1800 by St. Marie-Madeleine Sophie Barat. They established themselves in Egypt in 1903 where they maintain schools in Cairo, and the Pensionnat du Sacré-Cœur in Heliopolis, and a school in Samâlût and Abû Qurqâs.

The Missionary Sisters of the Nigrizia (Pie Madri della Nigrizia) were founded by Msgr. Daniel Comboni. They came to Egypt in 1887. To-day they have more than 300 sisters

working in Egypt, primarily in hospital but also in educational work. The Missionary Sisters are found in the Agouza Hospital, Ma'âdi Hospital, Dar al-Shifa, Aswân Hospital. They have schools in Helwân, Zamalek, Dokki and Aswân.

The Daughters of Maria Ausiliatrice or the Salesians of St. Don Bosco (Filles de Marie Auxiliatrice ou Salésiennes de St. Don Bosco) was founded in 1872 by St. Don Bosco and Marie Dominique Mazzarello. The Salesian Sisters established a school in Alexandria in 1914, later they established themselves in Heliopolis and in Cairo. They have 58 sisters.

The Order of Mount Carmel of Matariya was founded in 1927. The sisters are devoted to a life of contemplation and manual work. Their house is in Matariya. They have 10 sisters.

The Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception were founded in 1847 by Anton Cardinal Hassounian. They came to Egypt in 1935, where they are engaged in educational work in Cairo and Alexandria. They have 9 sisters.

The Congregation of the Melkite Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour (Congrégation des Religieuses Melkites Missionnaires de Notre Dame du Perpétuel Secours), founded in 1936 by Msgr. Maximos Sayegh, direct a school in Heliopolis. They have 10 sisters.

The Sisters of Charity of Besançon, founded in 1799 by St. Jeanne A. Thouret, arrived in Egypt in 1909 to work among young impoverished girls and women. They maintain schools in Cairo, Alexandria, Nag' Hammadi and Work in the government hospital in Sohâg. They have 40 sisters.

The Sisters of Jesus the Redeemer (Religieuses de Jésus Réparateur), founded in 1923, established themselves in Egypt in 1939. They maintain a house in Cairo. They engage in nursing and social work. They have 6 sisters.

The Sisters of the Holy Family, founded by St. Emilie of Rodez in the 19th century, direct a school in Mansûra. They have 8 sisters in Cairo and Mansûra.

The Little Sisters of the Assumption, founded in 1865 by Fr. Etienne Pernet, have worked in Suez until 1967. Their work is now in Cairo and Alexandria.

The Little Sisters of Jesus, founded by Fr. Charles de Foucault in the 19th century, work in Cairo, Alexandria and Minya. They have 9 sisters.

The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, founded in 1873 by Mother Ignace de Jésus, in the U.S.A., established themselves in Heliopolis, Alexandria and Cairo. They are engaged in educational work. They have 20 sisters in Egypt.

The Order of the Poor Claires was founded in the 1212 by St. Clara under the direction of St. Francis of Assisi. They arrived in Egypt in 1914 and established themselves in Ramleh, Alexandria. They have 25 sisters.

The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary, founded in 1877 by Helen de Chappotin, came in 1923 to Egypt where they established themselves for educational work. They direct schools in Cairo, Alexandria, Armant, Luxor, and Kom Ombo. They have 54 sisters.

The Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This congregation was founded in Egypt in 1859 by Mother Catherine Troiani. Together with five other sisters she had left the convent of the Poor Claires in Ferentino, Italy, to establish a new institute, which originally was called « The Franciscan Sisters of the Mission of Egypt », a name which clearly indicates the purposes of the new foundation. Later on, when the congregation spread to other countries, the congregation changed its name to the present one. In Egypt there are 16 convents with 14 schools, 9 dispensaries and 220 sisters, of which 161 are Italian, 28 Egyptian, 9 Syrian, 5 Palestinian, 11 Maltese, 3 Armenian and 3 of other nationalities.

The Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth (Congrégation des Sœurs Franciscaines Elizabéthines),

founded in 1828 by Mother Elizabeth Vendramini, came to Egypt in 1935, where they established themselves in educational and social work. They have schools in Tûairât (1935), Naqâda (1937), Maghâgha (1944), Armant al-Hait (1944). They work in the Coptic Hospital in Cairo and have recently opened a dispensary near the Pyramids. The congregation in Egypt maintains eight houses with 61 sisters, of whom 30 are Egyptians, the others are Italians.

The Franciscan Sisters of St. Scolastica (Jugoslavian) have their house at Sharia Qasr al-Aini, Cairo, near the Church of St. Mary of Peace, and in Alexandria. Their work deals with the protection of women and children. They have 13 sisters.

The Carmelite Sisters of St. Joseph were founded in 1872 by Leontine Jarre. They came to Egypt in 1931 where they maintain elementary schools in Cairo and Abû Tîg. They have 12 sisters.

The Congregation of the Brotherhood of Christian Unity was founded in Alexandria in 1965. They have three members engaged in œcumenical work.

The Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena were established in Egypt in 1968 to work among the Syrian Catholics at the Church of the Holy Rosary in Daher.

The Lay Order « The Grail » founded in Egypt by Gail Malley in 1955 has worked ever since in Akhmim. They maintain a community center for the education in home economics for girls.

5. — THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN EGYPT (ANGLICAN)

The Episcopal Church in Egypt which belongs to the Jurisdiction of the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem is the outgrowth of the work of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.).

The work of the Episcopal Church in Egypt can be divided into four categories. The medical work was begun by Dr. Harpur who in 1889 founded the Harpur Memorial Hospital in Old Cairo. A little later, a branch of this hospital was opened in Menûf. The educational work centered around five schools, of which there were two schools in Old Cairo, two schools in Menûf and one school in Bulâq. The Boys' School in Menûf is now administered by the Ministry of Education. Thirteen village schools were handed over to the Coptic Orthodox Church.

In addition to the Cathedral of All Saints, the Episcopal Church in Egypt has the Church of St. Michael and All Angels in Heliopolis ; the Church of Jesus the Light of the World, which is the Temple Gairdner Memorial Church, situated adjacent to Harpur Memorial Hospital, Old Cairo ; the Church of the Good Shepherd, Gizah ; the Church of the Epiphany, Port Said ; the Church of St. John the Baptist, Ma'âdi ; and the Churches belonging to the Anglican Chaplaincy of Alexandria.

The first Protestant missionary approach to Egypt was made by the C.M.S. in 1825. Actually, the operations of the C.M.S. in Egypt date back to the year 1815, when the Rev. W. Jowett visited Egypt to confer with the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch as to the means by which the Society could render its aid to the Copts. In 1825, five missionaries, including Gobat, who afterwards became Bishop in Jerusalem, Lieder, Müller, Kruse and Kugler were sent to Egypt. The C.M.S. aided the Coptic Church in every possible way by establishing schools, opening a Coptic Seminary and helping the Coptic Church in preserving the best of its tradition. In 1862, however, the work of the C.M.S. had gradually died down. In 1882, partly in response to appeals from Miss Whately, the Society determined to start a second Egypt Mission, the special purpose of which was the evangelization of the Muslims.

In 1952, the work of the C.M.S. was transferred to the Episcopal Church of Egypt.

Lit. : Stock, E., The History of the Church Missionary Society. 3 vols. London, 1909.

6. — THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN EGYPT

The Protestant Maglis al-milli

The purpose of the Protestant maglis al-milli or community council is to provide for the Protestant churches and fellowships an agency, in which they can discuss their mutual problems and concerns. The maglis al-milli consists of twenty members, of which fourteen belong to the Coptic Evangelical Church. The chairman is the Reverend Elias Maqar, pastor of the Heliopolis Coptic Evangelical Church. In order to consolidate the work of the large number of Protestant denominations represented in Egypt, it has been agreed by the maglis al-milli to recognize merely four Protestant denominations, namely, the Coptic Evangelical Church, the Holiness Church, the Plymouth Brethren and the Pentecostal Church. Thus, for example, the Holiness Church will include the congregations belonging to the Church of Faith, the Church of the Standard, the Church of God and the Free Methodists. In order to gain recognition, a church is expected to have a minimum of congregations, for example, the Baptist Evangelical Church requires twenty congregations before recognition by the maglis al-milli can be extended.

The Coptic Evangelical Church

Responsibility for the establishment of this Church in Egypt belongs to the United Presbyterian Church of North America, whose first missionaries entered Egypt in 1854. Within the first decade this new Church was born.

To-day it comprises a total community of between 70,000 or 80,000 believers, almost all of whom have their roots in the Coptic Orthodox Church.

The first American missionaries to Egypt were Dr. and Mrs. Thomas McCague and Dr. James Barnett. They soon were joined by Dr. John Hogg, Dr. Julian Lansing, Dr. Andrew Watson (father of Dr. Charles Watson, found-

er of the American University) and others. Great emphasis was laid on the establishment and operation of good schools, Bible teaching and distribution, and a preaching ministry based in several major cities but also carried on in many villages largely by means of house-boat-travel up and down the Nile. Medical work and an expanded Christian literature program were subsequently added. Scores of schools were eventually opened throughout the Delta and the Nile Valley. In 1860, the missionaries organized themselves into a presbytery under authority of the General Assembly in America. In 1863, the first congregation was organized and the following year a School of Religion was opened. In 1871, again on authority of the General Assembly, the missionaries organized themselves into a Mission Association, concerned strictly with the program and problems of the Mission, thus opening the way for the infant national church to grow with a large measure of independence. By the turn of the century there were four presbyteries. To-day there are eight, including one in the North Sudan. Over these was the authority of the Synod of the Nile, an integral part of the United Presbyterian Church of North America until it was granted permission to withdraw in 1957. Financially independent for many years, except for several cooperative projects, the Coptic Evangelical Church, in 1926, assumed full responsibility for the Theological Seminary where a student body of twenty-five seminaries is enrolled.

Twenty-three Coptic Evangelical congregations are to be found in Cairo. Oldest in the country is that at Azbakiyah, where both Church and Mission now have their central offices. Strongest in numbers and service is that at Faggalah. The largest church edifice belongs to the congregation at Qasr al-Dubârah. Located on an excellent site, it was financed entirely by local contributions. The church was erected in 1946-1948, and has a maximum seating capacity of 2,000.

The Coptic Evangelical Church has about 200 organized congregations from Alexandria to Aswân served by about 180 ordained clergymen. Another 50 preaching centres are served by about 40 lay evangelists. Only about 50 congregations are completely self-supporting. Aid to the rest is apportioned by the presbyteries and the synod from funds raised almost entirely from local sources.

Over the years, all of the schools established by the American Mission have been turned over to the Coptic Evangelical Church. These schools number ten, enroll nearly 8,000 Egyptians, employ a national staff totalling 500, and are situated in eight cities from Tanta (in the Delta) to Luxor. One additional school still under direct Mission control, and located in Alexandria provides instruction for children of Presbyterian missionaries in Egypt, the North Sudan, Ethiopia, and Cameroun.

Some important Coptic Evangelical or Mission institutions :

Asyût College was founded in 1865 by Dr. John Hogg. More than 90% of the clergy of the Coptic Evangelical Church have received their secondary education there. It has a large, attractive campùs on the north edge of town.

Pressly Memorial Institute (P.M.I.) ; founded in Asyût in 1865 by Miss Martha McKown, has done for thousands of Egyptian girls what Asyût College has done for boys. Situated within the city about 1 ½ km. from the College, it also possesses an attractive campus and buildings.

Medical work in Asyût was started in 1868, but carried on intermittently until the arrival in 1891 of Dr. and Mrs. L. M. Henry. Asyût Hospital, founded the same year, has been in operation ever since. It maintains a small Leper Clinic. Total bed capacity is 150. This work is turned over to the government.

Two American women began medical work in Tanta in 1896. The work of Drs. Anna Watson and Caroline Lawrence was chiefly among women, but it led to the establishment of Tanta Hospital, dedicated in 1904. A new wing was completed in 1952. In 1961, a new nursing education and residence unit was dedicated. Total bed capacity is 175.

The American College for Girls, founded in Cairo in 1910, has developed into one of the most outstanding educational institutions in Egypt. It is a direct outgrowth of the first school opened by the Mission in 1861 and operated for most of a century in the Mission's central building in Azbakiyah, from which the latter was moved (1958) to the Abbasiyah district. The original school

represents the oldest continuing institution for girls' education in the country. Its daughter, the American College for girls, offering a more varied curriculum and finer facilities, caters to a higher economic level of society. Its establishment was made possible by a substantial gift from John D. Rockefeller. In recent years alumnae giving and a Ford Foundation grant have made possible the economics unit. Its enrolment exceeds 1500. Now known as Ramses College, it is operated by the Coptic Evangelical Church.

Literacy work in Egypt, begun in 1946 under the direction of Dr. Frank C. Laubach and a group of Egyptians and Americans trained by him, has developed into a remarkably efficient and varied village ministry chiefly serving communities of Coptic Evangelical and Orthodox villagers. Literature, child welfare, nutrition, hygiene, Bible study, improved agricultural techniques, community development, and home industries round out a full program administered by the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services, a registered society, sponsored jointly by Church and Mission.

The Fowler Orphanage for Girls, situated in Abbasiyah, Cairo, was opened in 1906. Mission-founded, it was turned over to the Coptic Evangelical Church in 1960. The Church also operates an orphanage for boys in Helwân, south of Cairo.

Agamî Youth Conference Centre, located on the edge of the Mediterranean, 18 kilometres west of Alexandria, was established in 1955 through a large gift raised by young people of the United Presbyterian Church in America. First construction of permanent buildings was undertaken that summer by the first Protestant Work-Camp in Egypt, comprising 10 American young people and 40 Egyptians, working in shifts. Eight to ten conferences are held there each summer by various groups.

OTHER EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

The Holiness Church, also known as the Free Methodist Church, began its work in Egypt in 1902 under the leadership of the Reverend H. I. Randel, later assisted by Bishop Trotter

and the Reverend Moore. From 1935-1950 Bishop Black was the outstanding missionary of this denomination. This church has 91 congregations and 78 ordained pastors. The church membership is 4,250. The church maintains a Theological College in Asyût with ten theological students and five instructors.

Emphasis is on school work in underschooled areas, as well as spiritual renewal and the opening of churches and preaching centres. In 1959, sponsorship of this denomination was transferred from the Canadian Holiness Church to the Free Methodist Church.

The Church of Faith in Egypt has its origin in the missionary endeavours of Louis Glenn and his wife, who in 1905 had settled in Damanhûr, later in the Fayyûm, and then in Sohâg. The work in Upper Egypt, in Sohâg and Girga was supervised by two American ladies, Miss Holdman and Mrs. Jackson. They founded a Bible school in Girga. To-day, the Bible School is situated at Midan Victoria, Shubra, Cairo. The denomination has nineteen churches, four of which are in Cairo, other churches are in Alexandria, Kafr al-Dawâr, Abû'l-Matameer, Sohâg, Girga, Hawâwîsh, Kom Budar, East Zûq, West Zûq, al-Lahaiwah, Bandar, Abû Shûsha, Girgarîs, etc.

This church emphasizes sanctification, sabbath observance and adult baptism.

The Plymouth Brethren began their work in Egypt in 1880 under the leadership of Otto Bliedel and Pinkerton. Their centre is at Ruqui al-Ma'ârif, Gazirat Badrân, Shûbra, Cairo. The Plymouth Brethren have no organized ministry and do not worship liturgically, but conduct their services as they are moved by the Holy Spirit.

The Open Brethren are in many ways similar to the Plymouth Brethren. The first Egyptian to accept the doctrines of the Open Brethren was Arian Butrus, who in 1915 returned to Egypt from the United States of America. The fellowship was founded in 1935 under the leadership of Mr. Clapham. The

Open Brethren lay stress upon adult baptism and personal witness.

Both « Open » and « Closed » Brethren Churches are represented in the total community which numbers about 15,000, grouped in some 165 churches and meeting-places.

The Church of the Ideal or the Church of the Standard was formed in 1920 by a group of Canadian Holiness Movement missionaries. This denomination has about twenty-three congregations in Egypt. The main office of the denomination is in Asyût.

The Baptist Evangelical Church was founded in Egypt in 1955 by the Rev. Sadik Wassâlî Girgis, who began his work in the Fayyûm, from where it spread to other parts of the country. The church-centre is at 271, Sharia Shûbra, Cairo. This denomination, which is supported by the Southern Baptists (U.S.A.) has five congregations in Egypt, two in Cairo, one in Alexandria, Sanûris, Fayyûm and Bani Suef.

The First Baptist Biblical Church was founded by the Rev. Labib Michael in 1961. This denomination has three congregations, two in Cairo, one in Alexandria. The office is at 7, Sharia Abdallah Chourbagi, Shûbra.

The Church of God has twelve preaching centres with a total congregation of approximately 700 people. Furthermore, the denomination operates two Youth Centres in Cairo and Alexandria. The office of the Church of God is situated at 15, Sharia 'Emâd al-Dîn, Cairo.

The first resident Church of God missionary was the Rev. E. A. Reardon who came to Egypt in 1907, and spent most of his time in Asyût and in Alexandria. When Reardon returned to the United States of America in 1908, he left the mission work in the hands of G.K. Ouzounian, an Armenian minister. Except for short periods of evangelistic work by F. G. Smith in 1913 and H. M. Riggle in 1921, Ouzounian carried on the burden of the work until the arrival of the Rev. Thaddeus Neff in 1923. Under Neff's direction, the Mission began to spread to Minya and the Fayyûm. Work was also begun at Mallawi and

some villages near Mallawi. The Youth Centres in Cairo and Alexandria were opened in 1952 as a service for University students.

The denomination has congregations in Cairo, Alexandria, Kafr al-Dawâr, Asyût, Minya, Mallawî, Fayyûm and Ashmunain.

The Pentecostal Church or the Apostolic church was founded in 1914 by H.I. Randel in cooperation with C.W. Doney and A.H. Post. Their characteristics are baptism of the Holy Spirit and glossolalia, divine healing and adult baptism. This community of about 10,000 souls is distributed over some 134 churches and meeting-places, which are divided into four districts. By far the most widely-known single program related to this denomination is the Asyût Orphanage, now nationally administered and registered with and assisted by the Ministry of Social Affairs, but established in 1911 by Lillian Trasher, then a missionary of the Assemblies of God.

The Pentecostal Grace Church or the Church of the Apostolic Blessing was founded by a Canadian missionary in 1935 at Minya. Their doctrines are similar to those of the Pentecostal Church. The offices are situated at 7, Sharia Said Tamî, Zaitûn.

The Day of Pentecost Church with its offices at 10, Sharia Fuâd, Shûbra, has not yet been recognized by the Protestant Maglis al-Milli, the Protestant Community Council.

The Church of Grace separated from the Pentecostal Grace Church in 1940. The office of this denomination is at 5, Sharia Blasîs, Gizah, Cairo.

The Church of Christ grew out of the Pentecostal Church in 1948 under the leadership of the Rev. Sami Labîb, Qubbat al-Hawa, Shûbra, Cairo.

The Peniel American Mission in Port Said was begun in 1895 by two missionaries sent out by the Peniel Missions of Sacramento, California. In 1897, they opened a girls school in Port Said and later a Kindergarten in Port Fuâd. The two

churches of this mission are affiliated with the Holiness Church.

The Armenian Evangelical Church, founded in 1896, has two congregations, one in Faggalah, Cairo and the other in Alexandria. The beautiful church in Cairo was built by the late Mrs. Victoria Chakedjian in memory of her husband. In recent years large-scale emigration has greatly decimated this church, so that to-day only about 20 families remain. Fewer than half reside in Cairo. Neither the Cairo nor the Alexandria congregation has an ordained pastor. A layman, resident in Alexandria, provides spiritual leadership to both churches.

The Armenian Brotherhood separated from the Armenian Evangelical Church and meets in the Tawfik School in Faggalah, Cairo.

The Greek Evangelical Church, founded in 1920, uses the premises of the Coptic Evangelical Church in Azbakiyah.

The Dutch Evangelical Mission was established in Qalyûb in 1871 by Mr. Nyland, a Dutch missionary. The work has grown slowly. In 1874, Nyland was joined by Mr. and Mrs. Spillenaar. The Coptic Evangelicals operate their former school and churches.

The Egypt General Mission, organized in 1897, began its work in Egypt in 1898. By 1939, six missionaries served in Egypt. In 1953, work was extended to Upper Egypt. In 1956, the E. G. M. was reorganized under the name E. G. M. U. S. A, and since that time, the mission works with the Evangelical Churches in Egypt, and does not establish new congregations.

The Society for the Salvation of Souls was founded in 1925 by five young Copts in Asyût, from where the movement spread throughout Egypt. This movement endeavours to effect an evangelical reformation within the Coptic Orthodox Church.

The Church of the Seventh Day Adventists was inaugurated in Egypt in 1910, when George Quay came from U.S.A. to begin his mission work. The new church and social centre

was dedicated in 1958, and is situated at Sharia Seif al-Dîn al-Mahrani, Faggalah. The denomination has congregations in Cairo, Alexandria, Sohâg and East Zûq.

The Asyût Orphanage

The Orphanage, formerly known as Lillian Trasher's Orphanage, is situated on the east bank of the Nile opposite Asyût. The orphanage consists of 13 brick-buildings, a church and a swimming-pool. The boys' dormitory covers an area of half an acre. About 800 children enjoy boarding and education in the orphanage.

> In 1911, at the age of 23, Lillian Trasher, inspired by the work of Miss Marker's Faith Orphanage in North Carolina, sailed for Egypt. Here she was to assist in the Rev. Dunning's Asyût Mission. The direction of her work, however, was determined when a dying Egyptian woman holding her infant in her arms approached her with the request to accept the child. This child was the first orphan of the now famous Asyût Orphanage. At the time of her death, December 17, 1961, the orphanage in Asyût had an enrollment of 1,300 children to whom she was « Mama Lillian, God-mother of Egypt ». During the 50 years of her service, about 8,000 children passed through her orphanage, which is considered one of the most outstanding welfare institutions of Egypt.

Lit. : Howell, Beth Prim, *Lady on a Donkey*. New York, 1960.
Sumrall, Lester, *Lillian Trasher. The Nile Mother*. Springfield, 1951.

The School of Light (Madrasat al-Nûr) at Tema

The School of Light is situated on Sharia Abû Sinân, the main street of Tema, about 40 km. south of Asyût. The orphanage-school was begun in 1934 by English Missionaries. From 1939 to 1959, during which period the school was known as Bethel School, the institution was maintained by a Dutch mission. The school with its 700 students is owned by the Egyptian Church of the Brethren. The « soul » of the school has been for many decades Helen Voorhoeve.

The German Evangelical Hospital at Aswân

The German Evangelical Hospital at Aswân is situated on the east bank of the Nile next to the Grand Hotel, Aswân.

The beginnings of the German Evangelical Mission in Upper Egypt, formerly the German Sudan Pioneer Mission, go back to 1900. The work commenced with the opening of a school in Aswân, and in 1901, a clinic was opened. The hospital was dedicated in 1911. In 1960, a new wing of the hospital as well as a nurses' home were added to the existing buildings. The station has a staff of two missionaries, one physician, seven sisters and one technical assistant and about 30 Egyptian co-workers.

In addition to the work in Aswân, the German Evangelical Mission maintains since 1907 a station at Daraw, 9 km. south of Kom Ombo.

CHAPTER XXVIII

NOTES ON CHRISTIAN AGENCIES IN EGYPT

The Catholic Association of Free Schools in Upper Egypt

The Association was founded in 1940 by the Reverend Fr. Henry Ayrout, S.J., who was its director for about twenty years. The purpose of the association is to provide religious and general education to the children of the remote villages in Upper Egypt. Moreover, the association is concerned with social and medical work in the Upper Egyptian villages. In order to realize these objectives, the association took over many of the Upper Egyptian schools, which were operated by the Jesuit or the Franciscan Fathers. In addition to the work in Upper Egypt, the association has established a few centres in Lower Egypt. Over the past twenty years, the association has established a network of 126 schools, which are served by 270 teachers, offering education for over 12,000 children of both the Muslim and the Christian faith. The children are provided with books, clothing, food, soap and medical care. The pupils include 7,671 Catholics, 3,550 Coptic Orthodox, 560 Coptic Evangelicals and 1,060 Muslims. Eighty dispensaries have also been opened in the villages to cope with the appalling state of health. Considerable numbers of devoted educated ladies contribute their time to work in the dispensaries as well as to conduct catechism and hygiene classes to both adults and children. Furthermore, with great zeal, these ladies, the so-called *responsables,* have conducted campaigns

for contributions. This response, from a class of people, who formerly seemed so oblivious of the social problems of Egypt, has been one of the heartening aspects of the association's work.

The principal office of the Catholic Association of Free Schools in Upper Egypt is situated at 85, Sharia Ramses, Cairo.

The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Service

The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Service (CEOSS) works with all Christians, Coptic Orthodox, Catholic and Apostolic churches. It is an independent charitable organization, which is registered under the Ministry of Social Affairs of the A.R.E. It is affiliated with the Coptic Evangelical Church and the Near East Council of Churches. In 1961, more than 2,000 students were enrolled in CEOSS literacy classes.

> From illiteracy to literacy in ten days. This is the time it takes to teach the first book. After that comes a series of readers, eight books about the Life of Christ, and five books about Saleh, a peasant, who works to improve his own village.

CEOSS literacy workers concentrate their efforts for 10 or 12 months in one village. Organizing classes is only part of their work. They live with the people and teach them how they can help themselves. In the past few years, many people have learned to read and to write. The CEOSS Home Economics Program teaches basic principles and practical means for improving home conditions. This teaching is done through classes and through home visitations. By visiting the homes, the workers make friendships with the entire family. CEOSS has worked in 34 cities, towns and villages in Lower and Upper Egypt.

The main office of CEOSS is situated at 4, Sharia Milîgi, Cairo.

The Federation of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Egypt is situated at 72, Sharia al-Gumhuriya, Cairo.

The YMCA was founded in England in 1844 by George Williams (1821-1905) to promote social and religious work among young men. It grew out of meetings for prayer and Bible-reading, which Williams held among his fellow-workers in a dry-goods business in London. Similar associations had been founded earlier in Scotland. The movement spread rapidly ; in 1852, the YMCA was organized in the U.S.A. and in Canada. In 1891, the first foreign work was organized in India by the American YMCA.

The Federation of the YMCA in Egypt has the following local associations which are situated in Cairo, Alexandria, Asyût, Minya, Sohâg, Abû Qurqâs, Quweisna, Port Said, and Luxor.

In 1896, the first College YMCA was begun in Asyût as a result of a visit of Dr. John R. Mott. In February 1909, the first efforts were made to organize a Cairo Association of the YMCA. The Arabic Branch was established in 1910, to be followed by the Anglo-American Branch in 1920. In 1921, the YMCA was organized in Alexandria, to be followed in 1922 in Asyût. In January 1923, the Central Branch at Sharia al-Gumhuriya was opened to Egyptians. A staff of six trained secretaries, five from the U.S.A. and one from England, were appointed to Egypt. In 1923, the International Committee of the YMCA purchased two acres of land in Cairo, on which was situated the large palace of a former Prime Minister. The building was converted into a well-equipped YMCA centre. In 1930, the famous Pont Limun Club for needy boys was organized.

The YMCA in Egypt has not only been instrumental in leadership training throughout Egypt, it has helped to start the movement in Ethiopia and in several other countries in the Middle East.

The Young Women's Christian Association in Egypt

The National Association of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Egypt is situated at 11, Sharia 'Imad al-Dîn, Cairo.

The YWCA was founded in 1855 by two ladies simultaneously. In the south of England Miss Emma Roberts started a prayer union with a purely spiritual aim, and in London Lady Kinnaird commenced the practical work by opening homes and institutes for young women in business. In 1887, the two branches united in the Young Women's Christian Association, which seeks to promote the welfare of young women by holiday homes, clubs and rest-rooms as well as classes and lectures.

The National Association of the YWCA in Egypt has four local associations. The Cairo Association is situated at 11, Sharia 'Imad al-Dîn with the hostel at 4, Sharia Naus Bey, Antikhana, and the centre at 17, Midân Qubbat al-Hawa, Shûbra, and Pyramids Camp. The Alexandria Association is situated at 66, Rue Nabi Daniel. The Minya Association has its offices in the YWCA Hall, and the Asyût Association is situated at Sharia Naguib Qaldas.

The first YWCA hostel in Egypt was established in 1902. To-day, this hostel serves 80 women and girls. In 1918, a professional school for languages, short-hand and secretarial training was established. The first Holiday Camp was inaugurated in 1923, whereas in 1961 over 700 campers have benefited by the programs offered at Sidi Bishr and Mandara. The Pyramids' Desert Camp was built in 1928 for the purpose of bringing women together for study and recreation. The National Girls Movement, the Blue Triangle Girls, was formed in 1933. At present, there are eight groups of Blue Triangle Girls. The luncheon service for shop assistants and secretaries was inaugurated in 1951.

The Bible Society in Egypt

The head office of the Bible Society in Egypt is situated at 70, Sharia al-Gumhuriyah, 6th floor, Cairo. In addition to the head office, there are four Bible Society bookshops in

Egypt : The Cairo bookshop at 74, Sharia al-Gumhuriyah, the Alexandria bookshop at 2, Rue al-Bosta, the Tanta bookshop at Midân al-Sa'a, and the Port Said bookshop at 27, Sharia al-Gumhuriyah.

The Bible Society in Egypt is a Joint Agency of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society. The British and Foreign Bible Society (B.F.B.S.) was founded in London in 1804, whereas the American Bible Society (A.B.S.) was founded in New York in 1816.

The work of the B.F.B.S. in Egypt began in 1818, when William Jowett was sent on a special mission by the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) to collect information as to the state of religion in Egypt, and to discover the best methods for the propagation of Christian knowledge. Jowett went as far as Edfu and Aswân, where he visited many Coptic churches and monasteries. Also in 1818, Christopher Burckhart, a young companion of Jowett, obtained from the Coptic Patriarch the permission to serve as a representative of the Bible Society in the distribution of Holy Scriptures.

The work of the A.B.S. in Egypt began in 1836 with the arrival of S.H. Calhoun, who was the first Bible Society Agent to the Middle East. He was one of the 251 missionaries who were sent by the American Bible Society between the years 1820 and 1861.

In June 1937, the B.F.B.S. and the A.B.S. in the Middle East were united into two Joint Agencies under the name of Bible Lands Agency North and Bible Lands Agency South. The former, the B.L.A.N., was administered from New York, whereas the latter, the B.L.A.S., was administered from London, that is until 1956. Following the Suez War, the A.B.S. assumed full responsibility for the work in Egypt.

The Bible Societies publish more than 1000 editions of the Holy Scriptures, and provide the Word of God in nearly 1,200 languages. In 1960, the A.B.S. distributed 23 million volumes of Holy Scriptures. Egypt's share in this distribution was 165,100 volumes. Egypt's distribution for 1961 was 179,719 volumes.

In 1970, the Bible Society sold altogether 500,000 Bibles, New Testaments or Selections of the Holy Scriptures. In 1970, 75,000 New Testaments were purchased by the Egyptian Armed

Forces and 6,000 Bibles were bought by the Ministry of Education for School Libraries. All Arabic Bibles are now printed in Egypt. In terms of distribution, church relation secretaries of the Bible Society have replaced the former colporteurs.

Lit. : Canton, W., *The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society.* London, 1904.

Dwight, H. O., *The Centennial History of the American Bible Society.* New York, 1916.

The Ecumenical Advisory Council for Church Service

The EACCS is an association of independent Christian bodies sharing common concerns and desiring to work more closely together. It is the successor of the former Egypt Inter-Mission Council, and of the Egypt office of Church World Service. It is unique, in that it is the first ecumenical body in Egypt which has representation from all three distinct Christian traditions : Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant. Its most long standing service to the total Christian Community is its planning and sponsorships of the annual observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

CARITAS — EGYPT

Caritas — Egypt is a member of Caritas Internationalis.

The foundation of Caritas Internationalis, in its present form, was decided upon the initiative of the State Secretariat of the Holy See — during a week of studies — in September of the Holy Year 1950. Representatives of 22 countries attended : among them were managers of 12 national caritative organizations officially established by each Hierarchy.

Prior to 1950, European relief organizations were already collaborating, on the international level, under the name of

« Caritas Catholica » thereafter becoming Caritas Internationalis.

Caritas Internationalis is granted consultative status, in the United Nations specialized Agencies :

— The economic council (ECOSOC)

— The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

— Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Caritas-Egypt was established in June 1967, after the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since then it takes care especially of the refugees and displayed persons from the Suez Canal. 28 Caritas Centers have been set up in Cairo to assist 5,138 families. They receive food and are treated gratuitously in 18 dispensaries.

Caritas-Egypt receives donations from other Caritas, like the Swiss Caritas, for instance, which send may milk products. It also receives packages containing clothes from France, Germany and from the Catholic Relief Services. Most medical supplies come from Caritas Internationalis in Rome as well as other Caritas.

The Caritas Dispensary in Bulâq, inaugurated in April 1970, has offered services to over seven thousand people within one year. In May 1971, Caritas-Egypt has inaugurated its first medical and social centre near the Pyramids in the Kafr al-Sissy region. This centre includes a dispensary, a child-care agency and an educational unit for small children. Here, almost 16,000 patients are registered monthly.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES

The Coptic Orthodox Theological Seminary

The Coptic Orthodox Theological Seminary is situated at Dair Anbâ Ruwais, Sharia Ramses, Abbasiyah, Cairo.

During the reign of 'Abbâs I, the Coptic community began to take steps to improve its educational and cultural outlook. The leading figure in this movement was the Patriarch Cyril IV, who can be rightly considered one of the foremost men in the educational history of modern Egypt.

> Abûnâ Dâûd, later known as the Patriarch Cyril IV, was born in the province of Girga. At the age of 23, he entered the Monastery of St. Antony, where, after two years, he was elected hegoumenos. Consequently he initiated a religious and literary centre for young Copts at Bûsh. In 1853, Dâûd was consecrated Archbishop and within a year he was elected Patriarch.

As soon as Abûnâ Dâûd was consecrated Archbishop, he began to establish schools. His first school was the Coptic Patriarchal College which was opened in 1855. In the same year he started three other schools, one for girls in Azbakiyah, another school for girls in the Hârat al-Saqqa'în and a boys' school in the same district.

Cyril's policy as regards the Coptic Patriarchal College allowed children of all creeds to become students. In addition to arithmetics, geography and science, special attention was paid to languages, which included Arabic, Coptic, Turkish, English, French and Italian. In addition to his efforts to open

new schools, Cyril was responsible for the first private Arabic printing presses in Egypt. Yet, Cyril did not build a Theological Seminary, but he used to summon the candidates for the priesthood to the patriarchate, where either he or Qummus Girgis, his assistant, taught them.

The first Theological Seminary of the Coptic Orthodox Church was opened by Patriarch Cyril V at Mahmasha, Cairo on November 29, 1893.

The first head of the school was Hegoumenus Filûtâûs Ibrâhîm, who was succeeded by Yûsuf Manqarîûs. It was only in 1925, however, after the nomination of Archdeacon Habîb Girgis, that a theological school in the proper meaning of the word was started. After the administrative leadership of the Hegoumenus Ibrâhîm Atîyah the school underwent a thorough reorganization in 1953 when it was moved to its present location, the Anbâ Ruwais Building in Abbasiyah. In 1954, several university professors were employed at the Theological Seminary, among whom was Archdeacon Wahîb 'Atallah, soon to be the head of the theological school. In 1961, on the occasion of the first centennial of « the Father of the Coptic Reformation », Cyril IV, the new Theological Seminary was solemnly inaugurated by Pope Cyril VI.

The Theological Seminary has three different programs :

a. The Middle Program consists of five years of studies, for the holders of a High School Certificate. The successful completion of this program entitles one to the Diploma of the Theological Seminary.

b. The Upper Program consists of four years of study for holders of the baccalaureate. This program leads to the Bachelor of Theology degree.

c. The Evening Upper Program consists of three years of studies for students having a University Diploma or the equivalent. This program is open to students of both sexes and leads to the Bachelor of Theology degree.

The programs *a* and *b* are for theological students who want to enter the priesthood and are residents at the school.

The Theological Seminary offers about thirty fields of study under six main headings :

1. Holy Scriptures : Old and New Testament, exegesis, history and civilization of the Old and New Testament times. Greek and Hebrew.

2. Theology : Dogmatic, moral, spiritual, comparative, liturgical and pastoral theology.

3. Ecclesiology : Church History, the lives and writings of the Fathers, canon law, liturgy, hymnology.

4. Sociology and Religious Education : Social psychology, homiletics, catechetics.

5. Philosophy : Logic, general philosophy, cultural anthropology, comparative religion, Egyptian and African studies.

6. Linguistics and literature : Coptic, Greek, Arabic, English, Hebrew, Syrian and Ethiopian.

Instruction in these fields is provided by about forty professors and assistants, bishops, priests, deacons and laymen. About half of them work full-time with the Seminary. In addition, the Seminary provides certain extracurricular activities which are administered by five committees. The Spiritual Committee, the Pastoral Committee, the Cultural Committee, the Social Committee and the Sports Committee. The Seminary published the magazine *al-Kirazah* (proclamation) under the editorship of the director of the Seminary.

Lit. : Cramer, M., *Das Christlich-Koptische Aegypten, Einst und Heute.* Wiesbaden, 1959.

Heyworth-Dunne, « Education in Egypt and the Copts », *Bull. Soc. Arch. Copte*, VI, 91-108.

Wakin, Edward, *A Lonely Minority. The Modern Story of Egypt's Copts.* New York, 1963.

Present State of Theological Education in the Near East. Conference held in Cairo, Feb. 13-17, 1968 by the ATENE.

The Coptic Catholic Seminary

The Coptic Catholic Theological Seminary of St. Leo is situated on 15, Road 15 in Ma'âdi, a suburb 15 km. south of Cairo.

The zeal of the Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries led to a rapid growth of the Coptic Catholic Church at the beginning of the 18th century. For that reason the College for the Propagation of the Faith requested that young Egyptians be sent to Rome for theological training. From 1724 to 1949 over 30 priests were thus trained. Still, there was great need for a greater number of priests. In 1870 the Jesuits opened a seminary in the Muskî. In 1883 the school had 63 day students and 18 seminarians. In 1895 H.B. Cyril II Macarius, the newly appointed Apostolic Administrator, opened a seminary in the Jesuit House in Minya, which, however, served only a limited need. Catholic Egypt needed a regular seminary and in May 1896 the Coptic Catholic bishops requested Pope Leo XIII to authorise the opening of an Egyptian seminary, to be situated in Upper Egypt. Pope Leo XIII acceded to the request and provided the funds for the construction of the Seminary of St. Leo in Tahta, which was consecrated in 1899. In 1927 a Minor Seminary in Cairo was reopened.

In 1945 the ecclesiastical authorities suggested that the Tahta Seminary serve as a pre-seminary in preparation for advanced studies in the newly authorized Major Seminary in Ma'âdi. The direction of the Ma'âdi Seminary was first entrusted by Rome to the Lazarist Fathers, though since 1948 to the Jesuits. The prerequisite for theological studies is the Egyptian baccalaureate or its equivalent. During the four years of theology, the student studies dogmatic theology, ethics, canon law, scripture, historical and practical liturgy, Coptic, Islamic and Patriotic thought, sociology of religion, pastoral theology, catechetics and liturgical chant. Students have an average of five hours of class work a day. The faculty of eleven includes seven resident and four non-resident members.

The Coptic Evangelical Theological Seminary

The Coptic Evangelical Seminary is situated at 8 al-Sikka al-Beida in Cairo, where the buildings were erected in 1926 by the Evangelical Synod of the Nile.

The Evangelical Seminary started its activities in 1863, when the growing Evangelical Church felt the need for indigenous ministers to serve in it. The American Mission (Presbyterian) used to administer all of its activities, such as course of study, expenditures, etc. At the beginning, classes were given aboard a « Dahabiah », a houseboat equipped to sail on the Nile, then the school was moved to the premises of the American Mission in Azbakiyah. The Reverend Tadrus Hanna Labib was the first Egyptian to join the staff of the Seminary as professor of Biblical studies. From 1891—1925 he served as instructor and professor. The Reverend Gabriel Mikhail Dabi'a was the first Egyptian director to assume administration of the institution. He was succeeded in 1947 by Dr. Gabriel Rizkallah, who occupied this position until 1966. Since 1966 the Seminary was administered by Prof. Dr. Tewfiq Sâleh. The teaching faculty includes three full-time professors and nine part-time instructors. The seminary accepts students holding High School diplomas which are adequate for joining the Egyptian universities. After a four year course of instruction, students are awarded the Th. B. degree. Students at the Seminary come from many Arab countries and graduates serve the Evangelical Church in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait, Sudan, Kenya, etc.

CHAPTER XXX

THE INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIAN ORIENTAL STUDIES

The Institute of Coptic Studies

The Institute of Coptic Studies is situated on the second floor of the Dair Anbâ Ruwais Building at Sharia Ramses, Abbasiyah. The Institute of Coptic Studies was founded by the Coptic Community Council, the Maglis al-Milli, in 1954.

The nature of the work of the Institute of Coptic Studies can be divided in three fields :

1. *Academic :* As a post-graduate school, the Institue tends to raise the standard of academic studies in the fields of Coptic culture by planning for advanced studies, leading to a Diploma after a minimum of three years' studies. Graduates who have obtained the Diploma have the opportunity for research work under the guidance of the Institute's professors to obtain the degree of F.I.C.S. In addition, one of the main duties of the institute is the publication of research in the field of Coptic Studies.

The departments of the Institute are : Egyptian Philology and Literature, Historical Studies, Ethiopian Studies, African Studies, Semitic Languages, Archaeology, Theology, Canon Law, Christian Arabic, Social Studies.

2. *Practical :* The Department of Coptic Art is interested in promoting Coptic art and architecture with emphasis on Coptic iconography. The Department of Coptic Music studies and publishes the Coptic liturgies and hymns in musical notes. Numerous recordings of Coptic music

have been made. The Department of Photography and Microfilming plans to accumulate an index of Christian archaeological sites, icons and church buildings in Egypt.

3. *Social :* The Department of Social Studies is mainly concerned with the study of the Coptic community and its social problems, the training of social welfare workers and leaders, vocational education, family affairs, the rehabilitation of the blind through the St. Didymus Institute.

Moreover, the Institute of Coptic Studies has become a centre of Oecumenical studies and activities. Orthodox, Protestants, and Catholics meet together for study groups especially on social and educational affairs concerning all Egyptian Christians.

The publication of the Institute of Coptic Studies is the *Bulletin de l'Institut Copte.*

The Society for Coptic Archaeology

The Society for Coptic Archaeology, which is situated at 222, Sharia Ramses, Abbasiyah, Cairo, was founded on April 24, 1934, in the hall of the Coptic Museum at Old Cairo. The original name of the society was the Association of Friends of Coptic Art, a name that was changed in 1938 to the Society for Coptic Archaeology.

The Society for Coptic Archaeology has devoted its principal effort to publications. The annual *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* has come out fairly regularly, though various circumstances have hindered the publication of a volume every year. In addition to the *Bulletin,* two series of special publications have been formed, *Art and Archaeology* and *Texts and Documents.* A *Map of Christian Egypt* has had great success in scientific and religious circles, as well as among tourists. Finally, the Society has published several *Guides* to the monuments of the Coptic period. The Library of the Society for Coptic Archaeology contains the most significant studies in the field of Christian Egypt.

The society's excavations of a site in the Thebaid resulted in the discovery of the Monastery of St. Phoebammon.

The Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies

The Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies is situated at 1, Sharia Masna' al-Tarabiche, Abbasiyah. The Institute is part of a Dominican Monastery, which was established in 1928 by the Rev. Fr. Lagrange, the founder of the Biblical School in Jerusalem. At first, the Institute was dependent upon the Dominican School of Jerusalem. In November 1952, however, it became attached to the Province of France. On March 7, 1953, the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies was established with full autonomy.

The purpose of the Institute is to provide a place of study for Dominican scholars in Cairo. Through the initiative of the Rev. Fr. Jaussen, who was both an archaeologist and an orientalist, the range of the Institute was considerably widened, so as to make it a centre of scientific studies in Egyptology, as well as Arabic and Islamic studies. Moreover, the Institute serves the Catholic population of Egypt spiritually and academically in providing opportunities for discussions, conferences, and the publication of scientific research. The Institute has already gained fame on account of its scholarly publications.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is situated in the western part of the main building on the ground floor. The church was dedicated in 1953. The chapel is worth visiting because of its beautiful stained-glass windows which represent : Paradise, the Ark of Noah, the Sacrifice of Abraham, the Burning Bush, Jonah and the Whale, the Annunciation, and the Agnus Dei. The windows in the sanctuary represent St. Mark and St. Dominic. Noteworthy are also the modern Coptic representations of the Twelve Apostles on the haikal-screen.

The Franciscan Centre of Christian Oriental Studies

The Centre of Oriental Studies of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land is situated in the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land in the Muskî. The centre was established in 1954 with the purpose of promoting Oriental Studies with special reference to Christian Egypt and the Holy Land. The

library of the centre consists of approximately 10,000 volumes. The publication of the centre is the *Studia Orientalia Christiana : Collectanea.*

The Institute for Oriental Studies of the Patriarchal Library at Alexandria

The Instyitute for Oriental Studies of the Patriarchal Library was founded in 1952 on the occasion of the first millenium of the reorganization of the Patriarchal Library. The Institute, which is part of the Patriarchal Library, is situated in Ibrahimiyah, Alexandria. Its publication is *Analecta.*

The First Library of Alexandria

Ptolemy Soter began a collection of books in ancient Egypt, but Ptolemy II, surnamed Philadelphus, the famous Hellenistic patron of learning, was the real establisher of the great Alexandrian libraries. Not only did he establish the two libraries at Alexandria, the larger one in the Bruchium Quarter and the scaller one in the Serapeum Quarter, but he also ordered the translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, a version which became known as the Septuagint (LXX).

These two libraries, known respectively as the « Mother » and « Daughter » libraries, had a large number of volumes, varying from nearly a half million in the « Mother » to 40,000 in the « Daughter » library. Julius Caesar, though a learned man himself, destroyed the « Mother » library with its treasures of untold learning, and the fragments, which survived, were transferred to the Serapeum « Daughter » library, which was under the aegis of the Temple of Serapis. After the Edict of Theodosius I (392 A.D.), even this library was burnt.

The Patriarchal Library at Alexandria

One must distinguish, therefore, between the first Alexandrian library and the Patriarchal library, from which the great doctors of the Alexandrian Church derived

their learning (Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Pantaenus, St. Athanasius, St. Cyril).

Since the days of St. Mark, the library has had several homes. Wherever the patriarchs moved, there went the library ; from the Church of the Bottle, where Arius preached, to the Didascalium, and from there to the Church of the Holy Virgin (known also as the Church of St. Theonas). Later, under St. Athanasius and St. Cyril, the library was installed near the Cathedral of the Caesareum, where it remained until 642 A.D. The learned Patriarch of Alexandria, Eutychius (933-940), known as Said ibn Batraq, used to write : « I owe much to the books in the library ». It was during the patriarchate of Eutychius, that the library was reorganized into its present form as a Church Library. In 997 A.D., the library was transferred to Cairo, and later, under Patriarch Elias, it was nearly burnt by the mob, which became infuriated at hearing that the Byzantines had burnt the Arab fleet at al-Maka, the Cairo Arsenal.

When Cyril Lukaris was elected to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, he donated the *Codex Alexandrinus* and other valuable *MSS.* to such rulers as Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, Archbishop Laud and King Charles I. It is said that because of the curse which appears in the *Codex Alexandrinus,* prohibiting the taking away of the same from Alexandria, both King Charles and Cyril Lukaris met violent and evil deaths.

In 1928, the library was returned to Alexandria by Patriarch Meletios II and in 1948 a magnificent new library with lecture halls was built in Ibrahimiyah.

Lit. : Mosconas, T. D., « The Library of Alexandria », *Areo Quarterly*, 1, 1.

CHAPTER XXXI

TRADITIONAL SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE FLIGHT OF THE HOLY FAMILY TO EGYPT

I. EGYPT AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT OF THE HOLY FAMILY

1. *The Last Days of the Ptolemies*

In the year 51 B.C., Cleopatra, the beautiful seventeen year old daughter of Ptolemy XI, ascended the ancient Pharaonic throne of Egypt. It was understood that, after a few years, according to Ptolemaic custom, she was to marry her younger brother Ptolemy XIV. In 48 B.C., Ptolemy, wishing to be sole master of the state, banished his sister. Thus deprived of all royal authority, the charming Cleopatra withdrew to Syria, where she prepared to regain her rights by force of arms. His personal fascination for Cleopatra induced Julius Caesar to undertake a war on her behalf.

In the meantime, however, Gnaeus Pompey, at one time triumvir and consul, and Rome-appointed guardian of the Egyptian rulers, saw his influence in Egypt endangered, and being jealous also of Julius Caesar's achievements in Gaul and elsewhere, he hurried to Egypt. Pompey's arrival in Egypt made it necessary for Ptolemy's council to decide whether to support Caesar or Pompey. Achillas and Lucius Septimus, the commanders of the Roman troops in Egypt, were sent to the city of Pelusium, on the seacoast, to welcome Pompey as a friend, and thus to murder him, which they effectively did.

Caesar attacked Egypt, and having secured Alexandria, reinstated Cleopatra as ruler of the land of the Pharaohs, and for a period of three years Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy ruled as co-regents, until the latter was poisoned at Cleopatra's orders. Returning with Julius Caesar to Rome, Cleopatra lived as his mistress until his assassination in 44 B.C., when she returned to Egypt. Subsequently she became the ally and mistress of Mark Antony. *Caesar and Cleopatra* was followed by *Antony and Cleopatra.*

Antony, infatuated with Cleopatra's charms, transferred several Roman territories to her dominion, for Cleopatra had always longed to restore the ancient empire of her royal ancestors. Several times she travelled to Palestine where she attempted to captivate with her irresistible charm King Herod the Great. Herod, though much impressed with the queen's personal attractiveness, realized that any liaison with her would merely lead to enmity with Antony. Cleopatra, deeply distressed by Herod's aloofness, succeeded, however, in persuading Antony to order Herod to come to visit him in Alexandria. Herod, however, outwitted the Egyptian Queen. With gold and other gifts, the King of 'Judaea came to Alexandria to bribe and win over Antonius. In spite of this, Herod had to relinquish the coasts of Palestine to Cleopatra, as well as the city of Jericho which was famous for its beautiful gardens and plantations. Here, according to Flavius Josephus, was the famous plantation of balsam-trees, which the Queen of Sheba had presented to King Solomon. Cleopatra transplanted some of these trees to Heliopolis, where they were cared for by Jewish gardeners from the Jordan valley. Some thirty years later, the Holy Family on their flight to Egypt sought refuge with these Jewish gardeners, who had been appointed by Cleopatra.

In 31 B.C., the Roman Senate dispatched a fleet under the command of Octavian. Antony's fleet supported by Egyptian ships under Cleopatra met that of Octavian off Actium on the coast of Greece. After the defeat of Antony's forces, Cleopatra escaped to Alexandria, where Antony joined her. Having no prospect of ultimate success, she accepted

Octavian's proposal to assassinate Antony. She enticed her former lover to join her in a mausaleum which she had built so that they might die together. Antony, in the mistaken belief that his mistress had already committed suicide, took his own life. Octavian refused, however, to yield to the beauty and attraction of Cleopatra. Rather than to be led captive to a triumphant Rome, Cleopatra chose death as an alternative and applied an asp to her youthful bosom. Whichever her moral failings, Cleopatra was a woman of outstanding genius and a worthy opponent of Rome. As Idris Bell has well said, « Cleopatra's choice of the snake which was to give her release from captivity was significant. It was an asp, the Egyptian cobra, the sacred snake of Lower Egypt. As Pharaoh, Lord of the Two Llands, Cleopatra had worn the double crown, the vulture crown of Upper, the cobra crown of Lower Egypt. The cobra was the minister of the sun-god, whose bite conferred not only immortality but divinity. Cleopatra had taken the royal road to death and joined the company of the gods, and nothing remained for Octavian but to incorporate Egypt in the dominions of the Roman people ».

2. *Egypt as a Roman Province.*

With the famous words « I added Egypt to the dominions of the Roman people », which Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus Augustus records in the Res Gestae, an autobiography, Augustus, now sole ruler, sums up his expedition to Egypt. One of the first things which Augustus did was to order the destruction of all the statues of Antony, of which there were more than fifty. He entrusted the government of his new province, the greatest and richest of all the Roman provinces, to a man of little note and talent, Cornelius Gallus, a friend of Virgil, and himself a poet ; and this he did intentionally, so as to avoid the possibility that a governor of this rich province might be tempted to aspire to the Roman Imperium.

Cornelius Tacitus mentions in his *Annals,* that the Senate gave the command of the provinces to members of their own body only. Augustus persuaded the Senate to confer this new province, the chief granaries of the Empire, on him. He

appointed prefects of equestrian rank to it. Those were answerable for their conduct to nobody but the emperor, who for the Egyptians was a new Pharaoh, « the Lord of the Two Lands », represented in the cartouches with the usual divine attributes. No Egyptian city was allowed to have a senate or municipal form of government, on the contrary, Augustus not only gave the command of Egypt to a man below the rank of senator, but also ordered that no senator should ever be allowed to set foot in Egypt.

At Alexandria, Augustus was visited by Herod, King of Judaea, who hastened to beg him to restore to him those portions of the kingdom which Antonius had bestowed upon Cleopatra. Augustus received him as a friend, and not only returned to him the territory which had been taken away from him, but also added the province of Samaria and the free cities on the coast.

The Greeks of Alexandria, jealous of the fact that the Jews also had the right of citizenship, urged the Emperor to retract this privilege. Augustus, however, who had no reason to agree to the petitions of the Greeks, granted the Jews the full privileges of the Hellenes. They were allowed their own magistrates and courts of justice with the free exercise of their own religion. The Hellenistic Jews in Egypt were indeed important, on account of both their numbers and their learning *(Acts 9 : 6)*. It is presumably among the Jewish colonies in Egypt that the Holy Family dwelt during their stay in this land.

The first step which Rome had to take as regards her new province was to restore law and order in the country. Three legions and nine cohorts were stationed at Alexandria but there were detachments at various points up the Nile valley. Strabo states that one of the legions was stationed at Babylon, a fortress, which about twenty years later was to offer shelter to the Holy Family. This military force was more than adequate, for, when the people of Heroonpolis, a town of some military importance on the road to Palestine, revolted, and, afterwards, when rebellion broke out in the Thebaid against the Roman taxcollectors, these risings were

easily put down. As mentioned above, the supreme authority in the land was vested in the prefect, who was at the same time commander-in-chief of the troops and head of the civil, judicial and financial administration of Egypt. The old judicial system of itinerant courts was replaced by the *conventus* held periodically by the prefect at various places, for example, at Pelusium for the nomes of the eastern Delta, at Alexandria for those of the western Delta, and at Memphis for the rest of Egypt. These periodical *conventus* were not merely confined to the trials and lawsuits, but also included the examination of the reports and accounts of the nome officials.

Following the governmental practice of the later Ptolemies, Augustus divided Egypt into three large districts, the Thebaid, Middle Egypt, and the Delta. These districts were governed by *epistrategoi,* who were purely administrative, and without any military power. Otherwise, the old division of Egypt into nomes was maintained, each administered by a *strategos.* The priests of the temples were required to submit to the *strategos* of the nome a return of personnel and property, as well as the annual temple-accounts each year. The sacred land still figured in the land registers, though a good deal of it was confiscated, and the temples were placed under stricter control than ever before. While curbing the material power of the priests, Augustus did not interfere with the observance of the local cults, and a considerable amount of building at several of the great temples in Upper Egypt is dated to his reign. We even know of sacred buildings which were dedicated in his name, such as the peribolos of a temple at Soknopaiou Nêsos in the Fayyûm.

The list of building activities under Augustus is a comparatively long one, especially if one considers the public works, such as the construction of the camp at Nicopolis, the repair of the cisterns on the road thence to the Red Sea, and the digging of a canal from Schedia to Alexandria. Strabo mentions that the clearing of the canals, which every year were more or less blocked up by the same mud which made the fields fruitful, was one of the greatest tasks of the Emperor in Egypt. The prefect Gaius Petronius employed the leisure

of his soldiers on this wise and benevolent work. « Before the times of Petronius there was the greatest plenty, and the rise of the river was the greatest when it rose to the height of fourteen cubits, but when it rose to eight only, a famine ensued. During the government of Petronius (25, 21 B.C.), however, when the Nile rose twelve cubits only, there was a most abundant crop, and once when it mounted to eight only, no famine followed ».

This brief description shos that the Romans enforced a strong, centralized, and well-supported administration. Yet in spite of their administrative ability and the numerous projects which they initiated and completed, Egypt under Roman Rule was a cow milked for the benefit of Rome. The land of the Pharaohs was ruined by shortsighted exploitation which eventually led to both economic and social decline. It was during this period, that many towns and villages in Egypt were blessed by the visit of the Holy Family who fleeing from the oppressive regime of King Herod of Judaea sought refuge among the descendants of their Jewish ancestors in the Delta and the Nile Valley.

II. THE FLIGHT OF THE HOLY FAMILY TO EGYPT

1. *The Birth of Christ.*

« And it came to pass in these days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed » (*Luke* 2 :1). This general census took place every fourteen years throughout the Roman empire, which included at that time Egypt, Syria and Palestine. As regards the Roman province of Syria, « this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria » (*Luke* 2 : 2). Cyrenius, the governor, was the well-known Roman senator Publius Sulpicius Quirinius, who during the period between 10 B.C. and

7 B.C. commanded the legions in the war against the Homonadenses, a tribe of the Taurus Mountains in Asia Minor. During these three years, Quirinius had hid headquariers in Syria.

We know that Quirinius was appointed legatus of Syria in 6 A.D., and we have a record which indicates that a census was taken about the years 6 A.D. or 7 A.D. This census, however, cannot be that referred to by St. Luke, as the Evangelist clearly states that the first census took place at the time of the birth of Christ, while King Herod was still living, that is to say, before 4 B.C.

In this connection it should be noted, that in the change from the *Anno Urbis Conditae* (Roman Era) to *Anno Domini* (Christian Era), which was made by Dionysius Exiguus in 526 A.D., an error of four years occurred in his calculations. He placed the birth of Christ in the year 754 A.U.C. But Herod the Great, who slew the innocents of Bethlehem, died in April of the year 750 A.U.C.

Now, if we add the three and a half years residence of the Holy Family in Egypt (according to Coptic tradition) to the date of the death of King Herod (4 B.C.), we arrive at the date of 7 B.C. for the birth of Christ, which was the very period when Quirinius held office in Syria. Furthermore, if we count back fourteen years from the census made in 6 A.D. or 7 A.D., we discover the date of the first census in 7 B.C. the year of the birth of Christ.

« Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews ? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him » (*Matthew* 2 : 1-2).

Concerning this star, W. Keller writes in *The Bible as History,* that according to the calculations of Kepler and Schnabel, this particular phenomenon occurred in the year 7 B.C. In 1603, Johannes Kepler, the famous mathematician and astronomer, observed two planets, Saturn and Jupiter,

which in the constellation of Pisces had moved so close to each other, that they appeared almost like one single and unusually larger star. Studying his notes, Kepler remembered to have read in the writings of the Jewish philosopher Abrabanel, that the Messiah would appear when there was a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation of Pisces. According to astronomical calculations, Kepler deduced, that the same conjunction occurred in 7 B.C., the year in which Jesus Christ was born. In 1925, the German scholar P. Schnabel, while deciphering the Neo-Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions of the ancient School of Astrology at Sippar in Babylon, discovered a series of dates with regard to observations of planetary positions in the constellation of Pisces. Here, Jupiter and Saturn were carefully traced over a period of five months. The date, which Schnabel calculated, fell into the year 7 B.C. Furthermore, it was established, that this conjunction was particularly clearly visible in the Mediterranean area. According to Chaldaean astrology, the constellation of Pisces was the sign of the 'West-country', the Mediterranean ; and according to Jewish tradition, it was also the sign of Israel, the sign of the Messiah. Thus Keller writes : « This wonderful encounter of Jupiter and Saturn, guardian of Israel, in the constellation of the 'West-country', of the Messiah, must have deeply moved the Jewish astrologers of Babylon, for according to astrological ways of thinking, it pointed to the appearance of a mighty king in the west countrq, the land of their fathers. To experience that in person, to see it with their own eyes, that was the reason for the journey of the wise astronomers from the East ».

2. *From Bethlehem to the Nile Delta*

« And when they (the wise men from the East) were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young chlid and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word : for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother

by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son » (*Matt.* 2 : 13-15).

Before the Holy Family together with Salome, the midwife, departed from Bethlehem, they remained for a while in a grotto, which is situated south-east of the Basilica of the Nativity. This grotto, known to the Arabs as *Maghârat al-Saiyidah,* the Grotto of the Lady, is an ancient sanctuary, which is venerated by Christians and Muslims alike. An Armenian tradition relates that the Blessed Virgin Mary on her flight to Egypt stopped here and suckled her Child. Some drops of her milk fell on the rock, and it immediately turned white. There is good reason to believe that a church was built on this site by St. Paula, who lived in Bethlehem and died there in 404 A.D. Though, at first, dedicated to the Virgin Mother, the church was later known as that of St. Paula. In the 14th century, it belonged to the Greeks and was dedicated to St. Nicholas, and eventually it passed into Latin hands. This grotto has supplied those soft white stones, known as *Virgin's Milk,* which can be found in many Latin churches throughout Europe. The present church built over the Grotto was dedicated in 1872. The Grotto is a favourite place of pilgrimage for women on account of the milk-white rock, which is prized for its healing power and as an aid to lactation. Women pilgrims take away with them pieces of this soft rock, which having ground into powder, they mix with water and drink.

In connection with the Flight into Egypt, it would not be out of place to mention the most likely means of transport which the Holy Family used. Both the Eastern and Western traditions are unanimous that the journey of the Holy Family in Egypt was accomplished by ass. In this case, the Blessed Virgin would have been seated on the ass, holding the Divine Child in her arms, and Joseph would have walked at their side leading the ass. Such for example was the means of transport used by Moses, when he took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass and returned to Egypt (*Exodus*

4:20). Furthermore, the prophecy of Zacharias stated explicitly that the Messiah would come riding upon an ass (*Zech.* 9:9). Apart, however, from Biblical analogy and prophecy, the ass was the animal most frequently used in the East for travel. Indeed, the ass was one of the most valuable possessions of a family. In comparison to a horse, an ass is much more economical, for it can be given almost anything to eat. As a skilled worker, Joseph the Carpenter could certainly have afforded to purchase an ass. This, according to Jewish custom, would probably have been adorned with an amulet consisting of a fox's tail, or a crimson plume to protect it from the evil eye.

To depict the Holy Family as clad in the Arab dress of recent times, namely, the qamîs (a sort of long shirt), the abâyah (a top-robe), the kufîyah (a scarf) and the 'iqâl (a head-dress), is just as incorrect as to clothe them in the garments of the mediaeval painters. The clothes worn by the Holy Family must have been those in fashion at the time in the whole Graeco-Roman world. These, which were the same for men as for women, consisted of the *linea* (a long robe reaching from the neck to the feet) with close fitting sleeves, the *tunica* (a sort of tunic reaching to the knees) with short sleeves, the *planeta* or *casula* (a large round piece of stuff with a hole in the centre for the head to pass through) which fell in folds over the shoulders and arms and enveloped the whole body down to the knees. It was an out-door garment and afforded warmth and protection against the wind and rain. For travel and work a girdle was added, and for travel shoes or sandals were worn. Incidentally, these three garments, the *linea,* the *tunica* and the *planeta* or *casula* became ultimately the ecclesiastical vestments known as the alb, the tunicle and the chasuble. As regards the food eaten by the Holy Family on their travels, this must have consisted in addition to meat, fish and bread, of coarse horse-beans, lentils, chickpeas, cucumbers, onions, garlic and leeks. The fruits available at this period and in the Near East were grapes, dates and figs, and honey replaced the modern sugar. Wine « that maketh glad the heart of man » (*Ps.* 104 : 15) was a common beverage.

When the Russian Abbot Daniel (1106) visited the Byzantine monasteries in the Plain of Jericho, he stayed in a monastery known as « Kalamonia », for « here the Holy Virgin passed the night with Jesus Christ, Joseph and James at the time of their flights into Egypt ». It was then that the Holy Virgin surnamed this place « Kalamonia », which means 'good abode'. This tradition of the mediaeval Laura of Calamon has been adopted by the Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. Gerasimus in the Plain of Jericho, 1 km. south-west of the Oasis 'Ain Hagla. Here, on the ground-floor, below the narthex of the Church of St. Gerasimus, is the Church of the Holy Family, commemorating their visit to this site.

According to the *Armenian Infancy Gospel,* the Holy Family went to the ancient Philistine city and seaport of Ashkelon, where Samson went to kill thirty Philistines (*Judges* 14:19). At the time of the visit of the Holy Family, Ashkelon was a strong and beautiful centre of Hellenistic culture with a special cult to Dercetus or Atargates, a goddess with the body of a fish and the face of a woman. Herod the Great had embellished the city with fountains and sumptuous buildings, of which some beautiful Corinthian columns can be seen to this day.

From Ashkelon the Holy Family proceeded in almost easterly direction to Hebron, one of the oldest towns in the world. According to the Bible, the city was founded seven years before Zoan (*Num.* 13:22), the present village of Sân al-Hagar in Lower Egypt. Hebron's chief interest is now its Harâm, an enclosure built over the traditional site of the cave of Machpelah (*Gen.* 23). Within the enclosure is a mosque, formerly a 12th century Crusaders' Church, which in its turn was built on the site of a basilica of Justinian's time. Within the mosque are the cenotaphs of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca and Leah. The *Armenian Infancy Gospel* informs us that the Holy Family remained here in hiding for a period of six months.

About 40 km. further, in a westerly direction, there is the site of the ancient Canaanite stronghold of Gaza (*Gen.*

10:19). If the Holy Family had followed the caravan-route from Judaea to Egypt, they would have passed this city, in which Samson was enticed and finally overcome by the beautiful Delilah (*Judges* 16 : 21-31). At the time of Christ, this city had acquired a certain amount of splendour and magnificence, as it had become a centre of Hellenistic culture, for after its destruction by Alexander Jannaeus, brother of Aristobulus I, in 94 B.C., the Roman Consul Aulus Gabinus had rebuilt it in 57 B.C.

By taking the route which runs parallel to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, the Holy Family must have crossed, after another two hours, the Wâdî Gaza. It was here that Sir Flinders Petrie carried out his excavations on the presumed site of Gerar. Here also, Amimelech, King of Gerar, took Sarah, the wife of Abraham under the impression that she was his sister, as he himself said, but later he restored her to her husband (*Gen.* 15 : 1-16). When Isaac sojourned in Gerar, the people of the land desired Rebecca, his wife, but Abimelech protected both Isaac and Rebecca (*Gen.* 26:1-25).

A day's journey from Gaza brought the Holy Family to the ancient township of Jenysos, which is mentioned by Herodotus, the Greek historian. To-day, this village, which is part of the Gaza-strip, is known as Khan Yunis.

The next town on the Holy Family's path would have been Raphia (Rafah), at present the frontier-town between the Gaza-strip and the province of Egypt. Raphia, which had been the battle-ground of the contending forces of Ptolemy IV and Antiochus the Great in 217 B.C., was conquered by Alexander Jannaeus, the Maccabee and annexed to Judaea. It was restored to Egypt, however, by Gabinus. During the Byzantine period, Raphia, like Gaza, was the seat of a bishop.

Continuing the caravan-route for another 44 km., about two days of travelling, the Holy Family crossed the River of Egypt, the Wâdî al-Arish, which at all times formed the natural boundary between Egypt and Palestine. Strangely enough, what the ancients called the 'River of Egypt' was

not the mighty Nile, but a small stream. By crossing this inconspicuous trickle, the Holy Family must have thought of the many occasions in the history of their people, when this 'brook of Egypt', with its «goings out» at the sea, served as boundary, from the days of the conquest of Canaan (*Num.* 34:5), to the calling of Solomon's assembly (*I Kings* 8:65). A little further on, the Holy Family supposedly reached the city of Rhinocolura, the present al-'Arish. Criminals and those accused of high treason were sent to this city to receive their punishment, which consisted in cutting off their noses.

Since we possess no evidence either written or oral as to the exact route followed by the Holy Family in their flight from Bethlehem to Egypt, the particulars given above are purely conjectural, but we may reasonably suppose that once the Holy Family were out of danger of pursuit, they would have travelled along the usual caravan-route between Judaea and Egypt, which passed through towns and villages, where they could have obtained food and shelter.

The first town which would be reached after Rhinocolura was Ostrakini. Of this place we know very little, beyond the fact that Abraham, Bishop of Ostrakini, attended the Oecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. As a town, Ostrakini has disappeared, though there is a village called Straki, which is situated in the vicinity of al-'Arish.

Almost at the south-western end of the caravan-route from Judaea to Egypt there is the celebrated city of Pelusium (Farama), metropolis of the province of Augustamnica, seaport and key to Egypt. To this city, which is identified with the Biblical Tâhpanihes, Johanan, the son of Kareah (588 B.C.), «took the remnant of Judah... men and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzâradan, the captain of the guard, had left with Gedaliah, and Jeremiah the prophet» (*Jer.* 43 : 5-8). Sixty-three years later, in 525 B.C., Psammetichos III was defeated at Pelusium by Cambyses, the King of Persia, and Egypt became a Persian province. At the time of the Holy Family's

visit, Pelusium was still an important city and sea-port, and it is quite likely that they stopped here to rest for several days, before entering the Nile Delta. Pelusium had many marshes lying around it, which, at the time of the Holy Family's visit, were called Barathra or water holes and swamps. For that matter, Pelusium may have received its name from the mud (πηλσῡ) of the swamps. The Greek monk Epiphanius (9th cent.), as well as Bernard the Wise (870 A.D.), mention the tradition according to which the Holy Family visited this historical city, which Maqrizî reckoned among the wonders of Egypt. In the *Itinerarium Bernardi Monachi* we read : «From Tamnis we came to the city of Faramea, where is a church of St. Mary, on the spot to which at the admonition of the angel, Joseph fled with the child and its mother. In this city, there is a multitude of camels, which are hired from the natives by the travellers to carry their luggage across the desert (to Jerusalem) which is a journey of six days». That many of the pilgrims passed through Farama is attested by the itineraries of men like Jacques de Vitry (1180 A.D.) and Marino Sanuto (1321 A.D.). Abû Sâlih considered that «Farama was exceedingly wonderful, and one of the most ancient foundations of which there is a record. There were at Farama many churches and monasteries which were wrecked by the Persians and the Arabs». This city, indeed, was occupied by 'Amr ibn al-'As on his way to conquer Egypt. Subsequently, it was fortified again by al-Mutawakkil about 853 A.D. In 1117 A.D., Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, occupied the city, but unable to hold it, he laid it in ruins. Baedeker speaks of the ruined Tell Farama, which now contains no objects of interest.

3. *In the Nile Delta.*

It was at the time when Gaius Turranius (7 B.C. — 4 B.C.) was Roman Prefect of Egypt, that the Holy Family crossed the narrow isthmus at al-Qantara (the bridge), which separates Lake Manzalah from Lake Ballâh. It was over this isthmus that passed the ancient caravan-route from Judaea

to Egypt, a route which centuries before had been used by Abraham (*Gen.* 12-10) and Jacob and his sons (*Gen.* 16). In the steps of the patriarchs, the Holy Family entered the Province of Goshen.

By the land of Goshen (*Gen.* 45:10) we are to understand approximately the triangle of land which has as its apex the modern town of Zaqaziq, and as its base Bilbais and Tell al-Kabir. However, as the city of Pithom, the site of which is marked by the mounds near al-Mahsama, was also in the land of Goshen, the Wâdî Tumilât must likewise have formed part of Goshen. Moreover, both the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Flavius Josephus add On, that is to say, Heliopolis, to Pithom and Raamses, the fortified cities built by the Hebrews for Pharaoh (*Ex.* 1 : 11). If On really lay in Goshen, this would extend the district in which the Hebrews lived almost to the outskirts of the present City of Cairo. It should be remembered that it was Asenath, a daughter of a priest of On, whom Joseph married (*Gen.* 41:45).

The *Armenian Infancy Gospel* mentions that the Holy Family made their way into the Province of Goshen by passing through the Plain of Tanis, and that they settled in Bilbais, where they remained for a while. This tradition would suggest an alternate route, following the ancient Roman military road from al-Qantara via Fâqûs to Bilbais. At the same time, it would be most unlikely to suppose that the Holy Family passed as far north as Tanis, the Biblical Zoan (*Ps.* 87:12, 43) and the present fishing village of Sân al-Hagar.

There is good reason to assume that the Holy Family entered the Nile Delta through the Wâdî Tumilât, and, if this were the case, one of the first towns which they would have reached on their way would have been Pithom or Pi-tum, the abode of Tum, the Setting Sun. We read in *Exodus* 1:11, that the Children of Israel in the land of Goshen built for Pharaoh the treasure cities Pithom and Raamses. (The *LXX* has fortified, strong cities). These military storehouses were evidently built by Ramses II, the Pharaoh of

the Oppression, using for their construction Nile mud mixed with chopped straw. The ruins of Tell al-Maskhûta, near al-Mahsama, mark the site of the Biblical Pithom. This site was excavated for the Egypt Exploration Fund by Prof. Naville in 1883, who discovered among the temple-buildings several grain-stores.

The assumption that the Holy Family went through the Wâdî Tumilât is supported by a Spanish tradition, supposedly told by King Sancho IV, el Bravo (1257-1295), at the time of the conquest of Tarifa. This story affirms the route which the Holy Family took along the coast of the Mediterranean. According to this Spanish tradition, the Holy Family was accompanied by a virgin (presumably Salome) and three young men. (One is tempted to see in these three young men a reference to the Three Holy Children in the Furnace or the Three Celestrial Visitors to Abraham).

Because of the heat, however, the Holy Family decided to look for shelter in a cave. But as they approached a cave, a dragon came out of it and began to yell when he saw the Christchild. Thereupon, the dragon fell down and worshipped the Child. At the same time many lions and other wild animals joined the Holy Family. At first, the Holy Virgin was much frightened, but Jesus pacified his Mother and all the wild animals dwelt together and the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled which said : « The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them» (*Isaiah* 11:6). Then the Holy Family proceeded further and Joseph saw a palm-tree which provided shade for the weary travellers, and the palm-tree bent down and offered its fruits to the Holy Virgin. When the Holy Family entered the province of Hieropolis, they came to a town called Sieno.

If we accept Hieropolis to be the ancient Heroonpolis, the Holy Family must have passed through the Wâdî Tumilât.

Heroonpolis or Abû Keyshed is the site of the ruins of Tell al-Maskhûta. As to Sieno, this word has such a Spanish form that it will be difficult to discover beneath its dress the Egyptian name of the city.

On their way through the Wâdî Tumilât, the Holy Family must have seen the byblus (papyrus) and the Egyptian bean which at that time grew in the marshes and lakes. The byblus, though not cultivated, could be seen especially in the lower parts of the Nile Delta. From the Egyptian bean, the ciborium, a kind of drinking cup was made, which could be found in great abundance in the shops in Alexandria and elsewhere, where they were sold as drinking vessels.

About 15 km. west of the ancient Pithom, there was situated the township of Succoth, the first halt of the Israelites on their exodus from Egypt (*Ex.* 12:37, 13-20). This site is generally identified with the village of al-Qassâsîn. A day's journey from Succoth would have brought the Holy Family to the other treasure city built by the Children of Israel, Raamses, the present village of Tell al-Kebir.

At Raamses, the Holy Family entered the fertile Nile Delta. Travelling further on in a westerly direction, they passed the ancient city of Pi-Sopt, the present villages of Saft al-Hinna, and from thence they went to Bubastis, the Pi-Beseth of the Bible (*Ezekiel* 30:17, 18). Most probably, the court where Joseph had his headquarters was at Bubastis. This city, of which only the ruins remain at the present day, must have been very important in the past. The deity of Bubastis was the great goddess Bast, who is represented with a disk encircled by a uraeus on her head and holding a lotus-sceptre in one hand. The festivals of Bast were celebrated with great rejoicings. Herodotus provides us with some very intimate knowledge regarding these festivities. «Now, when they are being conveyed to the city of Bubastis, they act as follows : for men and women embark together, and a great number of sexes in every barge, some of the women have castanets on which they play, and the men play on the flute during the whole voyage, the rest of the women and men

sing and clap their hands together at the same time... some dance, others stand up and behave in an unseemly manner... When they arrive at Bubastis, they celebrate the feast, offering great sacrifices, and more wine is consumed at this festival than in all the rest of the year. What with men and women, besides children, they congregate, as the inhabitants say, to the number of seven hundred thousand» (*Herodotus, Bk. II*, 60).

According to the *Coptic Synaxarium,* Basâtah (Bubastis, Pi-Beseth, Bastah or Tall Bastah), which is 2 km. southwest of Zaqaziq, was the first town in the Delta which the Holy Family and Salome visited. They were not, however, well received despite the fact that they revealed a spring of water, which became a source of healing for all, except for the inhabitants of Basâtah. Details of this story are given in the *Vision of Theophilus,* where we read that in Basâtah, the Holy Family met two brigands, Titus, who was an Egyptian, and Dumachus, a Syrian. And the Syrian brigand said to the Egyptian : « I should have liked to plunder the garments that are on this woman and her Son, because they resemble the garments of kings, and if I had encountered them in a place other than this, I would have taken those garments from them». But the Egyptian brigand said to him : « Let us proceed on our way. I never saw a Child like this since I was born ». — Then Jesus asked for water and the Blessed Virgin looked around and did not find the water which her Son was asking for. Then the Blessed Virgin arose, and took her Son and brought Him to the town and asked the women for water to give to Him, but none of them wished to give them anything, as the inhabitants of that town had little compassion. When the brigands saw the Blessed Virgin and her Son entering Basâtah, they came back and went to Joseph, and while he was asleep, they abducted the golden and silver sandals of Jesus and fled. When the Blessed Virgin realized this, she was much distressed and wept. When Jesus, however, saw His Mother weeping He wiped off her tears, and stretched His small finger and made the sign of the cross on the earth, and instantly a spring of water jetted forth and

flowed on the ground. And they drank this water which was as sweet as honey and as white as snow. Then Jesus blessed this water and said : « Let this water help make whole and heal the souls and bodies of all those who shall drink of it, with the exception of the inhabitants of this town of whom none shall be healed by it ».

The Coptic Church of St. George in Zaqaziq is said to be built upon the traditional site of the house of Klûm and Sarah. According to a local tradition, the Holy Family in dire need turned to the house of Klûm. As the Holy Virgin knocked at the door, Klûm apologized saying that his poor wife could not receive them because of an illness which had kept her in bed for many years. When the Christchild heard this, He said : « Thy wife Sarah is not ill » and immediately Klûm's wife arose and welcomed the Holy Family, and Klûm and Sarah served them for the time of their stay. And before the Holy Family departed, the Divine Child said to Sarah : « Blessed art thou and blessed is thy house ».

The Copts remember the town of Basâtah also because of St. Apoli, the son of Justus Stratelates, who was beaten and flogged at Basâtah during the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian (284-305 A.D.). Finally, St. Apoli was cast into prison, where Jesus appeared to him by night and consoled him.

To-day, the ruins of the ancient Bubastis with their brick walls are the only remains of this once famous city. The temple of the goddess Bast at the south-west foot of the hill was excavated in 1887-89 by Prof. Naville.

The Holy Family went on a day's journey further southward, and reached the town of Bilbais, by which passes the modern Ismailia Canal. As the Holy Family entered the town, a funeral procession came out, and Jesus, who had compassion on the mourners, raised the dead man to life. Then He learned that it was the son of a widow, who having been brought back to life, declared : « This is the True God, the Saviour of the world, Who is born of the Blessed Virgin, Who accomplished a mystery which the human intellect cannot

comprehend ». And all the inhabitants of Bilbais believed in Jesus.

During the Middle Ages, the pilgrims to the Holy Places, who passed through Egypt, stopped at Bilbais to kneel at the foot of the great tree, which according to both Christians and Muslims, commemorates the stay of the Holy Family at Bilbais. The Muslims called it the Tree of the Virgin, and they had such respect for it they reserved the space around the tree as a necropolis for their venerated saints. They relate with sorrow, that the soldiers of Napoleon who passed by this tree wanted to cut it down, but at the first blow of the axe, it began to bleed, and they departed in fear. The tree was eventually cut down about 1850 by some workers who used the wood to make a fire.

To-day, there is only one Coptic Church in Bilbais, the Church of St. George (Mârî Girgis) which is situated in the north-eastern part of the town, about one kilometre from the main road. The site which commemorates the visit of the Holy Family to Bilbais is the 'Uthman Ibn al-Hâris al-Ansarî Mosque, in the centre of the town, at the corner of Sharia al-Ansarî and Sharia al-Baghdâdî.

According to the *Ethiopic and Coptic Synaxaria,* the Holy Family left the Sharqiya Province and pursued their way in a northerly direction till they reached the town of Samannûd (Gamnûdî), the ancient Sebennytos or Zeb-nuter, which is situated on the Damietta branch of the Nile, where they crossed the river towards the west. A local tradition in Samannûd relates that the present Church of Apa Nûb was built on the ruins of an ancient church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, which, in its turn, was built on the site, where the Holy Family stayed. The Christians of Samannûd point to a place in the nave of the church, where at one time there was a well, the water of which had been blessed by Jesus. The relics of the martyr are preserved in this church, whither every year about a thousand pilgrims flock on July 31st, the feast of the Saint. Apa Nûb, who was a native of Nahisah, went to Lysias, the Governor of Samannûd, and professed that

he was a Christian. He was then taken away on board a ship, and crucified to the mast, but was afterwards miraculously released. At length, Armenius, the Governor of Alexandria had him put to death.

In his *Homily,* Zacharias, the 7th century Coptic Bishop of Sakhâ, states that the Holy Family proceeded from Samannûd to Burullos, near the Mediterranean coast. Here, at the Shrine of St. Dimiana, the Antonian monks relate an oral tradition of the visit of the Holy Family to the area, which three centuries later was blessed by the blood of the martyrdom of the Virgin-saint Dimiana and her forty virgins. The large crowds of pilgrims, who, every year from the 5th to the 22nd of May, come from all over Egypt, and assemble at the Shrine of St. Dimiana, know little or nothing of the tradition of the visit of the Holy Family. They come because of the intercessions of Sitt Dimiana, the daughter of the Governor, who supposedly appears annually in some form or another to the multitude of the faithful.

Having crossed the Damietta branch of the Nile, the Holy Family travelled westwards to al-Gharbiya, the province which is situated between the Rosetta and Damietta branch of the Nile. On the way, Jesus put His foot upon a stone, and the mark of the sole of His foot remained upon the stone, and the place became known as Bikha Isous, that is to say, the footprint of Jesus. I have been unable to locate this place which is mentioned by the *Ethiopic and Coptic Synaxaria.* It has been suggested that Bâsûs may be a contraction of the name Bikha Isous, but it is most unlikely that Bikha Isous should be identified with the village of Bâsûs which lies between Cairo and Qalyûb, as stated by Amélineau. Dr. Murad Kâmil suggests that Bikha Isous might be the town of Sakha, famous for its pillar on which St. Agathon the Stylite (7th century) stood for fifty years. Sakhâ is situated in the province of Gharbiya, about 2 km. south of Kafr al-Shaikh. This suggestion might be supported by pointing to a confusion of the Arabic orthography of the two names. Indeed, if the diacritical points were omitted, the

Arabic word-ligatures of Sakhâ and Bikha show distinct similarities. Moreover, in the early Middle Ages, Sakhâ was known as a Christ-loving town, ι ὅλ ιϩιόϩπολις a title otherwise only used for Alexandria. What was the reason for this privilege ?

After Bikha Isous, the Holy Family travelled westwards and crossed the river, probably the Rosetta branch of the Nile. Continuing their journey, they saw from afar the Desert of Scetis, the Wâdî al-Natrûn, and Jesus blessed it, and said to His Mother : « Know, O my Mother, that in this desert there shall live many monks, ascetes and spiritual fighters, and they shall serve God like angels ». Though there is no tradition to support it, the Holy Family would most probably have seen the Desert of Scetis from the town of Terrâna, the ancient bishopric of Terenuthis, fifteen kilometres north of al-Khatâtba. Terrâna, which is situated to the west of the Rosetta branch of the Nile, is the town which is nearest to the Desert of Scetis, actually about forty kilometres from the Monastery of St. Macarius (Dair Abû Maqâr). To-day, there are only four monasteries left in the Wâdî al-Natrûn, namely, the Monastery of the Romans (Dair al-Barâmûs), the Monastery of the Syrians (Dair al-Surîân), the Monastery of St. Bishoi (Dair Anbâ Bishoî) and the monastery of St. Macarius, which is dedicated to the famous St. Macarius who is honoured among the founders of monasticism, in both the East and the West. In 1976, there were about 180 monks occupying the four Wâdî al-Natrûn monasteries.

4. *In the Nile Valley.*

Continuing their journey southward, the Holy Family eventually reached the City of On or the Biblical Bethshemesh (*Jer.* 43:13). At the time of Strabo, about sixteen years before the visit of the Holy Family to On or Heliopolis, the city was entirely deserted, not having recovered from the destruction which it incurred at the time of the Persian invasion (525 B.C.). However, various temples and buildings of historical interest were still standing and were pointed out

to Strabo by the dragoman of that time. The Holy Family would have naturally avoided lodging in this deserted pagan city, and in consequence they sought some dwelling place nearby in which there would most likely have been Jewish families living on account of its proximity to the Jewish centre at Leontopolis. Thus they halted at the site of the present village of Matariya, now a suburb of Cairo. The visit to Matariya is not only well attested by the *Apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* and the *Coptic Ethiopic Synaxaria,* but is also mentioned by the mediaeval pilgrims to the Holy Land. According to the *Ethiopic Synaxarium,* when the Holy Family approached Matariya, there was a staff in the hand of Joseph wherewith he used to smite Jesus, but Joseph gave Him the staff. Then said Jesus unto his mother : « 'We will tarry here' and that place and its desert and the well became known as Matariya. And Jesus took Joseph's staff, and broke it into little pieces, and planted these pieces in that place, and He dug with His own Divine hands a well, and there flowed from it sweet water, which had an exceeding sweet odour. And Jesus took some of the water in His hands, and watered therewith the pieces of wood which He had planted, and straightaway they took root, and put forth leaves, and an exceedingly sweet perfume was emitted by them, which was sweeter than any other perfume. And these pieces of wood grew and increased and they called them 'Balsam'. And Jesus said unto His Mother, 'O My Mother, these Balsam, which I have planted, shall abide here for ever, and from them shall be taken the oil for Christian baptism when they baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost'.

The *Apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* replaces the balsam with a palm-tree, a tradition which is also preserved in the Qurân. According to the Qurânic version, the Blessed Virgin saw a palm-tree and wished to rest under it. When she was seated there, she saw fruit on it, and she said to Joseph that she would like to have some. Then Jesus, sitting in His Mother's lap, with a joyful countenance, bade the palm-tree to give to His Mother of its fruit. The tree bent as low

as her feet, and she gathered as much as she wanted. He bade it to rise again, and give to them of the water concealed below its roots. A spring came forth, and all rejoiced and drank thereof. The *I Infancy Gospel* adds that when the Blessed Virgin had washed the swaddling clothes of Jesus, and had hanged them out to dry upon a post, a boy possessed with the devil took one of them down, and put it upon his head. And presently the devil began to come out of his mouth, and fly away in the shape of crows and serpents. From that time, the boy was healed by the power of Jesus, and he began to sing praise and give thanks to the Lord who had healed him.

The village of Matariya enjoyed great popularity among the pilgrims to the Holy Land. This blessed site must have appeared like a paradise to these pilgrims who had crossed the desert from Mount Sinai, for the well with its beautiful surroundings was a resort for such wealthy Mameluks as the Emir Yashbak, who built a domed house here in which, from time to time, he entertained his master and friend Qait Bey (1467-1496). Entrance to the garden cost the pilgrims six ducats for which sum they could enjoy relaxation and bathing in the pool, the waters of which both Christians and Muslims believed to be holy and medicinal. The Dominican Friar Felix Fabri (1480) noticed close to the gate an immense fig-tree. In its hollow trunk, as in a small chapel, two lamps hung, for the tree had once opened to provide refuge for the Blessed Virgin. There was a tradition that the Holy Family was pursued by two brigands, and that the tree miraculously opened to conceal them. According to Pero Tafur (1435-1439), only five pilgrims at a time were permitted to enter the Garden of Balm, and none were allowed to pinch or nip off leaves or twigs to take away with them. The reason for this protective policy may be explained by the fact that the earlier pilgrims were in the habit of depleting the balm-trees. Indeed, Burchard of Mount Sion (1285-1295) records that he went to Matariya and carried off much Balsam wood, and bathed in the well which waters the garden, wherein the Blessed Virgin had dipped her Son. All the pilgrims are

unanimous in their observation that the Garden of Balsam was tilled by Christians only. Ludolph von Suchem (1336) saw among the Christian guardians four Germans, one from Schwartzenburg, who had been a renegade, and another, a one-eyed man named Nicholas, who was a very good man, as the Christian captives bore witness. The balm was either obtained from the fruit of the bush, or by boiling the branches. It was used medicinally and also in the concoction of the Chrism which is used at Baptism. The Muslims recommended its use for nasal trouble, lumbago or pain in the knee, while the Christians prescribed it for snake-bites, toothache and poisonings.

As a recognition of their share, the Sultan was accustomed to give to the two Christian patriarchs a portion of balm. Thus, when De Lannoy (1421) was in Egypt, the Patriarch of the Copts was able to present to him, as Ambassador of France, a phial of pure balm.

Felix Fabri explained the presence of the bushes of balm at Matariya by quoting Flavius Josephus, according to whom the Queen of Sheba had presented them to King Solomon, and that they had blossomed in the Holy Land until they were transplanted by Augustus Caesar to Matariya. But Fabri was confident of one thing, namely, that the plants never flourished, until the visit of the Holy Family. There was a general belief that the Balsam-trees could not produce the balsam without the water of the spring. It is said that the Sultan Al-Malik al-Kâmil (1218-1238) once asked his father, Al-'Adil, to plant some of the trees in a neighbouring plot of land, but there they did not blossom. Thereupon, he received the permission to irrigate the trees with the water of the well of the Blessed Virgin, and consequently the trees revived and brought forth an abundant crop. Marino Sanuto (1321) and John Poloner (1421) believed that they had seen the actual palm-tree which had bowed itself to the Blessed Virgin, that she might gather dates from it, and had then raised itself up again. When the heathens saw this, so Sanuto remarks, they cut down the palm-tree, but it joined itself together again in the following night. The marks of the cutting were still seen at the time of his pilgrimage.

The balsam shrubs have long since disappeared. The sycamore-tree which now stands at Matariya was planted in 1672. The fall of this venerable tree, due to old age, took place on June 14, 1906, but fortunately a living shoot from it remains to this day.

From Matariya the Holy Family went to a locality, where now stands the Church of the Blessed Virgin in the Hârat Zuwaila of Cairo. It is situated in the north-east district of Cairo, at the end of a lane leading off the Sharia Bain al-Sûrain, and was probably first erected in the tenth century. From the 14th century to the year 1660 it served as the patriarchal church in Cairo. The lower church is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and the upper church to St. George. In the north-west corner of the lower church a doorway gives access to another church, which is dedicated to St. Mercurius. Annexed to the Church of the Blessed Virgin of the Hârat Zuwaila there is a Convent of nuns. The nuns of this Convent relate the tradition that, when the Holy Family rested at this locality, Jesus blessed the water of the well, and the Blessed Virgin drank from it. This well is situated in the floor before the southern sanctuary of the lower church, and the water is still used for healing the sick. Every year on the day of the feast of the Consecration of the first Church of the Blessed Virgin at Philippi (June 20th), Ethiopian priests come to take some water of this well. According to the nuns, they drink it and wash themselves with it, a common practice among Eastern Christians, as regards holy water.

Continuing their way southwards, the Holy Family passed the Fortress of Babylon (Old Cairo) which commanded the route to Upper Egypt and where they halted on their return to Palestine. They would have certainly seen the triangular pyramids of Gizah which may have seemed to them, as to the pilgrims several centuries later, to be Joseph's granaries. At the time of their visit, two of these pyramids, the Cheops and the Chefren pyramid, were reckoned among the seven wonders of the world. According to al-Hâfîz Abû Bakr ben Thabet al-Khatîb who had received the tradition from Nabit ben Sharit, there used to be at Gizah the palm-tree under

which the Blessed Virgin suckled Jesus, and this palm-tree was said to have been the only one in the region which bore any fruit. On their way southward, they would have seen the site on the bank of the Nile where Moses was hid in an ark of bulrushes and where he was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter (*Ex.* 2 : 3-5). Maqrîzî states that the ark in which Moses was hid at the banks of the Nile is kept at the Mosque of Tubah at Gizah.

Some twelve kilometres south of Cairo, at Ma'âdi on the very bank of the Nile, there is the Church of the Blessed Virgin with its three cupolas. Here, according to an oral tradition, there was at the time of the Holy Family's visit a synagogue which the Holy Family attended. Joseph became acquainted with the sailors of the Nile-boats, and the Holy Family was offered to be taken south to Upper Egypt. One of the monks of the Dair al-Muharraq (The Monastery of the Blessed Virgin) added that the Holy Family was able to afford these rather extensive travels because of the treasure, the gold, frankincense and myrrh which had been presented to the Christchild by the wise men from the East (*Matth.* 2:11). To this day, the flight of stairs leading from the church-yard to the Nile marks the site where the Holy Family embarked on their journey southwards.

In addition to this oral tradition of the Holy Family's visit to Ma'âdi, Abû Sâlîh speaks of the Church of the Pure Lady Mary, called al-Martûtî, which was surmounted by a cupola. According to this 13th century writer, this particular site was in ancient days a place of worship of the Israelites when they were in bondage in Egypt ; and when the Holy Family came down into Egypt, they sat in this place, where there is now a picture of the Blessed Virgin before the holy altar. The church was founded by the Copts under the name of the Lady, and was called al-Martûtî, which is the Greek word for Μήτηρ Θεου . According to al-Idrîsî, the Church of al-Martûtî was situated in Munyat al-Sûdân, on the western (*sic*) bank of the Nile, about twenty-five kilometres south of Cairo. This would place the locality in question south of Badrashein.

Maqrîzî, the Muslim historian of the 15th century, mentions a palm-tree in Ahnasyah al-Madinat, the ancient city of Herakleopolis, in the Province of Bani Suef, which was seen there until the end of the 'Umayyad Dynasty (750 A.D.). This palm-tree is supposed to have been the one of which the Qurân speaks : And the pangs of childbirth drove her (the Blessed Virgin) unto the trunk of the palm-tree. She said : 'O, would that I had died ere this, and had become a thing of naught, forgotten'. Then (one) cried unto her from below her, saying: 'Grieve not, thy Lord has placed a rivulet beneath thee. And shake the trunk of the palm-tree toward thee, thou wilt cause ripe dates to fall upon thee' » (*XIX*, 23-25). Passing through the Nile Valley, the Holy Family must have crossed several times the many irrigation canals which were constructed during the Roman occupation by the *epistrategoi* of Middle Egypt. These canals, we are told, were full of crocodiles, which in Arsinoë (Fayyûm), the ancient Crocodilopolis, were even accounted sacred.

Situated twelve kilometres south-west of Maghâgha is the small village of Ishnîn al-Nasârâ. A local oral tradition relates that the water of the well, about 80 metres north of the Church of St. George, was blessed by Jesus, when the Holy Family passed through this village on their way to where later Dair al-Ganûs was built. Another version of this local tradition speaks of a well under the baptistery at the western end of the southern aisle of the church. In former times, many people offered prayers in Ishnîn, so that there were as many churches in this locality as there were days in the year.

In the *Ethiopic Synaxarium* it is stated that the Holy Family went to a locality which is called Baysûs (Bet Iyâsûs), and here Jesus dug a well whereof the water cured every sickness and every pain. And He also set a sign in a certain river of Egypt, which rose in flood every year. At midday, the time of prayer, they offered incense to God by that well. As soon as the reading of the Gospel was ended, the water which was in the well would rise up and come to the mouth of the well, and they used to receive a blessing from it, and the water would recede straightaway until it reached its

former level, and the people used to measure by the cubit the height to which it rose above its normal level at the bottom of the well. If the height reached 20 cubits, there would be great abundance in the land of Egypt, if the height was 18 or 17 cubits, there would also be abundance, but if the height stopped at only 16 cubits, there would be a great famine throughout the land of Egypt. Maqrîzî adds to the tradition by saying that this well was situated in the church of the Monastery of Arjanus, and that on the night of the 25th of Bashons (June 2), the people would assemble to remove the stone-cover from the well, when they would discover that the water within had risen and began to sink again.

The fact that an older church existed at this site is testified by M. de Maillet (1703), French Consul-General, who developed a keen interest in all things pertaining to Egypt. He mentions a village called by the Arabs Bir al-Ganûs, and states that in this place the Copts have a sacred well, by which they foretell the heights of the annual inundation. With an elaborate ritual, a cotton cord, market at regular intervals by threads of white and blue, is let down into the well, so that the end touches the water. Then a table is placed over the mouth of the well, and the bishop celebrates the Divine Liturgy. When the Liturgy is finished, the table is taken away and the cord is examined. According to Coptic belief, the height to which the water has penetrated the cord marks the height to which the water will rise.

Doubtless we have here a reference to an ancient Nilometer. There were Nilometers also at Philae, Edfu, Esnâ, Luxor, Memphis and the Island of Rôda (Cairo), by which the government calculated the annual revenue. Apart from the above mentioned sources, I have not found any further reference to a Nilometer at this locality.

The site of Baysûs is now the village of Dair al-Ganûs, Maghâgha. Here it should be pointed out, that the village of al-Ganûs should not be confused with the village of Dair al-Ganûs, where, to this day, the sacred well is to be found.

The well, from which according to local tradition, the Holy Family drank, is situated at the western end of the south aisle of the Church of the Blessed Virgin. This church was built about 1870.

In commemoration of the blessings which the village received through the visit of the Holy Family, the people celebrate annually a fair (mûlid) on the 15th and 16th of Misrâ (August 21 and 22), during which time the pilgrims are said never to be bitten by vermin, whereas the children even play with scorpions. The number of pilgrims who attend this fair varies between 5.000 to 6.000 people who use the water of the well for drinking purposes.

Ten kilometres in southerly direction, there is situated on the edge of the desert the ancient city of Oxyrhynchus, in Coptic Pemje, the present town of al-Bahnasa, a city which in ancient times was the capital of a nome. In Pharaonic times, the fish Oxyrhynchus, a species of mormyrus, was worshipped here. Plutarch relates that the people of the neighbouring town of Cynopolis used to venerate the dog, and how a quarrel arose between the two towns, because the citizens of the one had killed and fed on the sacred animal of the other.

According to Maqrîzî, the Copts are in agreement that the Holy Family visited al-Bahnasa, and a commentator of the Qurân mentions that the passage « and we have made the Son of Mary and His Mother a portent, and we gave them refuge on a height, a place of flocks and water-springs », (*XXIII*, 50) refers to al-Bahnasa. Another Muslim tradition relates that the Holy Family travelled on an ass to al-Bahnasa, where there was a well in the chapel from which one could receive healing from infirmities. It was here, where the Blessed Virgin and her Son washed before prayer, and that all the water spilled over and then disappeared. Another commentator adds that at the time of their arrival at al-Bahnasa, the Holy Family went to the place of the famous well, and that Joseph returned, leaving the Blessed Virgin near the well. Then Jesus asked for water, and He began to weep because

of His thirst, and there was no water at that time, but the level of the water rose, so that Jesus could drink, and since that day the Christians have celebrated this event.

Muhammad al-Bâqir (676-731 A.D.) says that, when Jesus was nine months old, His Mother took Him to school in al-Bahnasa. The teacher said to Jesus : « Say the alphabet ». Jesus lifted up His head and said : « Dost thou know what these words mean ? » The teacher wished to strike Him, but Jesus said : « Do not strike me, but if thou dost not know, ask me and I shall explain to thee ». « Speak », said the teacher. « Come down from thy desk », answered Jesus. The teacher came down and Jesus took his place and began to say: « The *Alif* stands for the good deeds of God, the *Da* for the glory of God, the *Gim* for the splendour of God, the *Dal* for the religion of God, the *Ha* for the abyss of Hell, the *Wa* indicates the misery of those living in Hell, the *Ha* means the remission of sins of those who ask for forgiveness, the *K* is the word of God which will never change, the *Sad* is the measure for a measure, the *Ta* stands for the serpents of hell ». « Well », said the teacher to the Blessed Virgin, « take thy Son and watch over Him, for God hath given to Him wisdom and He doth not need a teacher ». This tradition should be compared with the almost identical story in the *Gospel of Thomas the Israelite* (140-160 A.D.).

Wahb (d. 728 A.D.) relates that the Holy Family stayed at a hospice for the poor at al-Bahnasa, which was supported by a diqhân, a nobleman of the king. One day, an important part of the diqhân's treasure was stolen, and the Blessed Virgin was afflicted about the misfortune. When Jesus realized His Mother's distress, He said to her : « Mother, dost thou wish me to show where the dikhân's money is ? » The Blessed Virgin informed the diqhân of what Jesus had said. When they were all gathered together, Jesus approached two men, one of whom was blind and the other lame, the latter being carried by the blind man. Then Jesus said to the blind man : « Arise ! » « This I cannot do », said the blind man. « How then was it possible for you to steal? » When they heard this, they struck the blind man until he showed

Jesus where the treasure was. This then was their trick. The blind man used his strength and the lame man his eyes. The stolen treasure was restored to the diqhân.

Oxyrhynchus (al-Bahnasa) used to be an episcopal See, and in the 5th century it is said to have possessed 10.000 monks and 12.000 nuns. Among the many famous Christians who have come from Oxyrhynchus, there is Dermatâûs, an ascete and founder of a monastery, and Harman, Bishop of Qaû in Upper Egypt. There is evidence that the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian were especially severe at Oxyrhynchus. Elias the Eunuch, Isaac of Tiphre and Epiuse suffered martyrdom here.

In 1897, B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt whilst excavating, discovered in the mounds of Oxyrhynchus the famous *Logia* or *Sayings of Jesus,* which form part of the find known as the Oxyrhynchus Papyri. To-day, al-Bahnasa possesses only one church and this is dedicated to St. George, and was built in 1923. The Christians of al-Bahnasa believe that the Holy Family stayed on the west bank of the Bahr Yusuf Canal, which strictly speaking is an arm of the Nile, though there are no traces left which would indicate their visit.

Near the ancient Cynopolis, the present village of al-Kais, the Holy Family embarked on a boat to travel south-wards. After 35 kms. they passed the Gabal al-Tair, which is almost opposite to Samâlût and Bîhû. Abû Sâlih recalls that, when the Holy Family passed this mountain, a large rock threatened to fall upon the boat, and the Blessed Virgin was very frightened. Jesus, however, extended His hand and prevented the rock from falling, and the imprint of His Hand remained on the rock. In the imprint of His hand there is a fine perforation, large enough to admit a collyrium needle, into which the needle is inserted, and, when it is pulled out, brings upon it a black collyrium which makes an indelible mark. It is said, however, that when Almeric, King of Jerusalem (1162-1173 A.D.) invaded Upper Egypt to drive out Shîrkûh the Kurd and his men from Egypt, they cut away the piece of rock upon which was the mark of the palm of

the hand, and took it back with them to Syria in 1168.

In order to visit the famous Church of the Blessed Virgin at Gabal al-Tair, it is advisable to take a sailing-boat either from Minya or from Samâlût, since there is no road on the east bank of the Nile. Alternatively, one can cross the Nile on the wind. Having reached the east bank of the Nile, one should allow at least two hours for the crossing, as it depends on the wind. Having reached the east bank of the Nile, one climbs the 166 steps cut in the face of the cliff and reaches the church which is reputed to have been built by St. Helena, the mother of St. Constantine. A memorial tablet on the west wall of the nave states that the first church was built in 44 A.M. or 328 A.D., and that it was repaired by Abba Severus, Metropolitan of Minya, in 1938. To this day, the Church of the Blessed Virgin attracts annually up to 10,000 visitors who come by sailing-boats from as far as Asyût, and even from Cairo.

From Gabal al-Tair, the Holy Family sailed southwards, passing on their way first the port of Khoufou, the present Minya, then the rock-temple of the goddess Pekhet, called by the Greeks Speos Artémidos, on the site of which is the present village of Bani Hasan al-Shûrûk, and finally, the Temple of Ramses II, on the ruins of which the Roman Emperor Hadrian built in 130 A.D. the town of Antinoupolis. The site is occupied by the present village of Shaikh 'Abâda

Opposite the ruins of Antinoupolis there is the town of al-Rôda, which is built on the site, where the Holy Family disembarked in order to proceed to the famous city of Scmunu, the Hermopolis Magna of the Greeks, at present the village of al-Ashmunain.

In their travels, the Holy Family took advantage of the natural means of communication by water along the Nile, and where this or a side-canal was not available, donkeys or camels were used. Generally speaking, during the latter period of the reign of Augustus, Egypt remained in a state of comparative tranquillity. At the same time, the Romans collected a large number of various taxes which became a

real burden to the Egyptians. The receipts of tolls paid by travellers give abundant evidence of this important means for gathering revenue. Strabo mentions that tolls were collected at Hermopolis which was the nearest town to the dividing line between the Thebaid and Middle Egypt. In most cases an *ad valorem* duty was collected, which in Upper Egypt consisted of two percent on the goods or commodities. Thus, the Holy Family was taxed at least once during their travels to Upper Egypt.

According to the *Vision of Theophilus,* the Holy Family found images of horses at all four corners of the gate which led into Hermopolis Magna. These, however, fell down and were broken when the Holy Family entered the city. *The Book of the Bee,* on the other hand, states that there were by the two buttresses of the gate two figures of brass which had been made by the sages and philosophers. And when the Holy Family passed through the gate, these two figures cried out with a loud voice saying : « A great king has come into Egypt ! » *The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew,* which also attests the visit of the Holy Family to Hermopolis Magna, mentions that Aphrodosius, the Governor of the city, when he saw that the idols were destroyed, adored the Child and said to those present : « Unless this were the God of our gods, they would not have fallen. If we do not adore Him, as they have done, we are in danger of such destruction as fell upon Pharaoh who was drowned with his army ». When the King of Egypt, however, heard this, he was troubled and moved, for he feared lest his kingdom should be taken away from him. And he commanded the heralds to proclaim throughout the whole city : «If any man knoweth, let him point Him out to us without delay ». And when they had made such a search, and did not find Him, the king commanded all the inhabitants of the city to go outside and to come in one by one. When Jesus entered, the two figures of brass cried out : « This is the king ! » And when Jesus was revealed, the king sought to slay Him. Now Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, was there, and was one of the King's officials, and he was held in much esteem by the king. He drew near to Joseph and asked

them : « Whence are ye ? » They said to him : « From the land of Palestine ». When he heard that they were from Palestine, he was sorry for them and went to the king and pledged himself for the Child. This then is the cause of the love between Lazarus and Jesus. The *Ethiopic Synaxarium* states that the Holy Family dwelt here with a man called Apelôn, whereas the *Coptic Synaxarium* calls the host Taloun.

There was a tree in Hermopolis Magna which worshipped the traces of the steps of Jesus, and Jesus said unto the tree: « Let no worm be found in thee for ever, but be thou a rememberance to all of my entry into this town », and He touched the Mukantah tree. The Byzantine historian Sozomenus *(Hist. Eccl.* V. 21) calls this tree Persea.

After this, five camels came near the Holy Family and they began to walk in the market, and they rendered the road too narrow, and Jesus looked at them, and in that hour they became stones. This detail may have been suggested by an avenue of sphinxes at al-Ashmunain, and the one in Luxor.

On the following day, great multitudes of sick people assembled around Jesus, and Jesus laid His hand on each of them and healed them of their infirmities.

Abû Sâlih adds further that the Church of the Blessed Virgin at al-Ashmunain contained several altars and marble pillars. One altar was used for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy all the time, for upon it was the mark of the hand of the Lord. Outside the church was a Syrian tree which bore the fruit called Sebastan, which is of red colour. This is the tree which bowed its head when Jesus approached it. The governor of the town wished to cut down this tree, but Agathon, the 39th Patriarch of Alexandria (658-677 A.D.), was standing under the tree, and when this wood-cutter struck it with his axe, the axe flew back into his face. Thereupon, the governor never again gave orders to cut down the tree.

To-day, there is no trace left of the Holy Family's visit to al-Ashmunain, and there is not now even a Coptic Church

in this once famous Christian city. About 10 km. southwards, the Holy Family stayed for a few days in Manlau, the present town of Mallawi. There are numerous Coptic churches in this town, among others, one is dedicated to St. Mercurius, one to St. George, and two to the Blessed Virgin.

Two days further travelling in southerly direction brought the Holy Family to the town of Kenis, (Nikyas, Funkus) the present Dairût al-Sharîf. The inhabitants of this town were very charitable, and the Holy Family remained there for several days, and Jesus wrought innumerable miracles in that place, and all those who had diseases or afflictions came to Him with faith to be healed. After this, Dianos, a carpenter who had known Joseph in Jerusalem, invited the Holy Family to stay with him. He had a son who was possessed by a devil, and when Jesus came near unto him, the devil took the boy and dashed him to the ground and cried out : « What have I to do with Thee, O Jesus of Nazareth. We left Jerusalem to flee from Thee and came to this town, and Thou followest us to torment us. Verily, Thou art the Son of God ». Then Jesus said : « O accursed devil, shut up thy mouth and come out of him ». And the child was healed in that very hour, and many people believed in Him. After Jesus had performed these miracles, the idols in the town were broken up and smashed to pieces.

From Dairût al-Sharif, the Holy Family travelled via Pepleu, the present Beblaw, to the town of Sanabû. At one time, Sanabû was an episcopal See, but already in the 15th century the Monastery at Sanabû was deserted.

According to the *I Infancy Gospel,* the Holy Family always received sufficient provision for their journey from the people who received them. Once, when they entered a certain town, there was a marriage which was then about to be performed. The arts of Satan and the practices of the sorcerers, however, caused the bride to be dumb, so that she could not so much as open her mouth. But when this dumb bride saw the Blessed Virgin entering into the town, and carrying the Child in her arms, she stretched out her hands to Jesus, and

took Him into her arms, and closely hugging Him, she kissed Him repeatedly, and straightway the string of her tongue was loosened, and her ears were opened and she began to sing praises unto God who had restored her speech and hearing.

Thereupon the Holy Family entered the city of Cusae or Qusquam, nowadays the village of al-Qûsîa, where according to Aelianus, Venus Urania and her cow were worshipped. As the ancient city of Gosu it had served as the capital of the Lower Sycamore Nome. At the time of the Holy Family's visit, there was a temple of idols which was surmounted by an idol on which there were seven veils. When Jesus reached the gate of Cusae, the seven veils were rent asunder, and the idol fell to the ground and was dashed to pieces. Then the devils who were in the idol threatened the priests and cried : « If thou dost not pursue that woman and the Child who is with her, and the old man who is with them, and the other woman, namely Salome, and drive them away, and if thou let them enter this town, they will put an end to thy service, and we will leave the town ». When the priests of the idols, who were a hundred in number, heard this speech of the idols, they pursued the Holy Family with rods and axes in order to strike them. Thereupon, the Holy Family left the town, and after they had travelled a little distance, Jesus turned and cursed the town, saying : « Let its people be in an estate lower than that of all other people, and let them be more lowly and suppressed than all the inhabitants of the Land of Egypt. Let its earth be cursed, so that nothing shall grow in it except halfa and rush-nut ».

To-day, al-Qûsîa is an insignificant village except for its railway-station which is used annually by thousands of pilgrims to the fair (mûlid) which is held in commemoration of the first Church of the Blessed Virgin at Philippi (June 20th) at the Dair al-Muharraq.

After Jesus had cursed the town of Cusae and its inhabitants, the Holy Family went on a short distance south (actually six kilometres west) of the town, and they rested for a while in a certain locality on account of their weariness

and fatigue. Here, in the present village of Meir, Jesus took the olive-wood staff of Joseph and planted it in the ground and said : « Thou shalt serve as a testimony of My arrival here ». And immediately, the staff took root and began to blossom.

Then in the evening, the Holy Family went up to a mountain, probably up to those hills situated one kilometre west of Meir, and lo, the two brigands whom the Holy Family had met at Basâṭah (Tell Bastah) came towards them. They had followed them from one place to another, and when they saw the Holy Family in this deserted mountain, they approached them with drawn daggers, unsheathed swords and their faces masked and said : « Ye have exhausted us, because we have pursued you for many days and have not found you, and have not had an opportunity to meet with you so as to plunder you, except at his moment, when ye have fallen into our hands. To-day, we will strip you of your garments and rob you ». And they snatched Jesus from the arm of His Mother and stripped Him of His garments. Then they took the garments of the Blessed Virgin, and they even took her veil. Then they also stripped Joseph, who was standing by speechless as a lamb. As for Salome, when she perceived what was taking place, she threw her garments to them before they came to her. After they had taken the garments, the brigands went away a short distance, and the Blessed Virgin who was greatly perturbed said within herself : « Perchance, they will return and kill my Son. Would that I were in Bethlehem, because then they would have recognized the old Joseph who would have implored them not to kill my Son. Would that they would kill me before killing my Son, that I may not see His great affliction. If they Were to kill my Son, I would kill myself with my own hands ».

While the Blessed Virgin was uttering these words and lamenting and weeping, her tears streamed down her cheeks. Then one of the brigands looked towards her and saw her weeping, and his nerves were shaken, and he spoke to his companion who was a Jew, a Syrian, and said to him : « O my companion, I beseech thee to-day not to take the garments

of these strangers, because I perceive on their faces a light greater than that on all the faces of mankind. This child resembles a prince, the like of whom I have never seen ». The Jewish brigand said to the Egyptian brigand : « I will not listen to thee this time, as I wish to take their garments, because they are royal garments which will bring us much wealth for our living ». Then the Egyptian brigand asked for his portion of the garments that it should be given to him, for he was much distressed at the nakedness of the Holy Family, and he returned his portion of the garments to them. When Jesus had put on His garments, He looked at the brigand and stretched out His finger and made the sign of the Cross over Him. Then the two brigands proceeded on their way, and Jesus said to His Mother : « O Mary, the Jews will crucify Me in Jerusalem. And these two brigands whom thou seest, one of them will be crucified on my right hand, and the other on my left hand. The Egyptian will be crucified on my right hand, and the Jew on my left, and the brigand who hath returned our garments will confess to Me and believe in Me on the Cross, and he will be the first to enter Paradise, even before Adam and all his descendants ».

And all sick persons who shall come in future to the place where the brigands stripped Jesus, and shall be stripped of their garments and be bathed, Jesus will heal them in honour of the fact that there He was stripped of His garments.

Not far away, about 8 km. south of Meir, the Holy Family discovered a well, though it was dried up. However, when the Blessed Virgin took Jesus to the well and He stretched forth His finger and blessed it, it became full. While searching around, Salome came upon a wash-basin and a water-jug, as if they had been placed there purposely for them. It was always Salome who bathed Jesus and His Mother who gave Him milk. And often while her nipples were in the mouth of Jesus, she saw the angels and celestial beings prostrating themselves and worshipping Jesus.

Satan, however, appeared to Herod and said to him : « Thou slewest the innocent children of Bethlehem in order to find Mary and her Son, and thou dist not find them. I shall tell thee now where they are ; the woman and her Son are hidden in a desert place of the southern side of the Land of Egypt. Arise and dispatch ten of thy soldiers to repair to that place and to kill them, and thus thou will be confirmed in thy kingdom. If thou dost not listen to me and dost what I tell thee, then to-morrow this Child will grow up and go to Jerusalem, both He and His Mother, and He will perform numerous and great miracles there. When thy soldiers depart to inquire after them, let them proceed as far as Cusae (Qusquam), and then let them travel to the west side of it, as far as the mountain, until they find them in the place, where they are living alone, for they have sought in all the Land of Egypt and not found anybody who would offer them shelter ». Thereupon, Herod assembled all the chiefs and elders and told them what has taken place and they said : « O our Lord, let it be as thou desirest ». And Herod chose ten valiant men and he informed them of the place in which the Holy Family were to be found, and he said to them : « When ye have found them, bring them unto me that I may kill them with my own hands. If ye do what I have commanded you, I will give unto each of you ten talents of gold, and ye shall be great in all my kingdom ». And the soldiers mounted their steeds in order to pursue the Holy Family.

Now there was a man from the Children of Israel, of the tribe of Judah and the family of the kings, who was related to Joseph, and his name was Moses. When he heard this news, he went unto Joseph with great speed and Divine help, and he came unto the Holy Family within three days, for he travelled in the night more than in the day. When Joseph saw Moses, he recognized him, and he rose up to greet him. And Moses told him what had taken place, and of what Herod had done, and how he had killed the children of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and how he had searched for the Divine Child. When the Blessed Virgin heard all this, she was exceedingly sorrowful and she trembled with fear, but Jesus comforted

her, and they turned to Moses, and Jesus said unto him : « Thou hast come unto us in order that thou mayest inform us of this thing. Thy coming and thy labour shall of a truth be rewarded, but because of the fear which thou hast caused to My Mother, take hold of this stone on which I was bathed, and put it beneath thy head, and sleep and rest for a little while ». And he took the stone and placed it beneath his head, and turning his face toward the east, he gave up the ghost. Joseph took his body and buried it in this house under the threshold, towards the interior. And his memory survives till this day. Thus the sprit of Moses became a guardian of the house against the intrusion of evil spirits.

After this, the Holy Family sojourned for six months in this house. Then Jesus said to His Mother : « This house in which we are shall contain holy monks on whom no rule in this world shall be able to inflict any injury, because it has been a refuge to us. Any barren woman who beseecheth Me with a pure heart and calleth to mind this house, unto her will I give sons. There shall, moreover, be in this place a blessed congregation who shall remember and bless My Name, and pray unto Me at all times, and so gain strength against all their adversaries. Those women in travail who shall be mindful of Me and of the labour which thou didst endure with Me, their prayers will I hear, and they shall be relieved ».

This holy place, blessed on account of the Holy Family's presence in it, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and is known as the Dair al-Muharraq. Pilgrimages to this church have been made by multitudes of people from all districts of Egypt from ancient times to the present day, by reason of the signs and wonders which have been manifested here.

Abû Sâlih states that the Holy Family stayed in a chamber on the upper story of the church, which is reached by mounting a flight of steps. In this chamber there is a window which was opened by the breath of Jesus, for it was not opened by the hand of man nor by any tool.

According to tradition, the Church of the Blessed Virgin at the Dair al-Muharraq was the first church built in Egypt, and the monks believe that this church was built immediately after St. Mark's arrival in Egypt, sometime about 60 A.D. The present church may be assigned to the 12th or 13th century. It lies about 1.20 m. below the present ground-level of the inner court of the monastery, and it is used for the daily celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

The Dair al-Muharraq belongs to that group of monasteries which were established by St. Pachomius or Anbâ Bakhûm as he is called in Arabic (d. 349 A.D.) or by his immediate successors. Of its sixteen hundred years of history almost nothing is known, except for the fact that four patriarchs of the See of Alexandria came from there. Since the 19th century, this monastery is known for its wealth and the charitable work which it performs among the peasants of the Nile Valley.

An oral tradition in Asyût asserts that the southernmost place visited by the Holy Family in Egypt was ten kilometres south-west of Asyût, the ancient Lycopolis or wolf-town. To this day, about 80,000 pilgrims assemble annually at the foot of Istabl 'Antar (Antar's stable, a mountain range rising west of Asyût) to commemorate and celebrate the stay of the Holy Family in the large rock-tombs of the 9th to the 12th Dynasty.

The fact that the above mentioned site has had a long Christian tradition cannot be denied, since Maqrîzî lists numerous monasteries and churches which were situated here. In times of persecution, pious believers took refuge in the caves of this ancient necropolis to live a life of penitence apart from the world. One of these, John of Lycopolis (4th century), bore the reputation of a saint and even a prophet. Yet, the oral tradition, which is upheld by hundreds of thousands of Copts and which is supported by Bishop Michael of Asyût, that a first century church was built here in commemoration of the stay of the Holy Family, cannot be verified.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin at Dair al-Adhra was

built by Bishop Michael in 1955. The church is situated east of the cave in which the Holy Family supposedly rested. The episcopal residence is situated north of the church, and the present building activities lead one to believe that this annual feast which is held between August 7 and August 22 will eventually become the largest Christian mulid in Egypt.

From Asyût, so the oral tradition continues, the Holy Family returned to the site of the Dair al-Muharraq.

3. — THE RETURN OF THE HOLY FAMILY TO PALESTINE

And it came to pass that during their sojourn at the place where there is now the Dair al-Muharraq, while Joseph was sleeping, the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream and said : « Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life ». (*Matth.* 2 : 20) Obeying the voice of the angel, the Holy Family, thereupon, returned to Palestine. Having left Cusae, they came again to the town of Hermopolis Magna (al-Ashmunain), and we read in the *Vision of Theophilus,* that its inhabitants received them with great joy and jubilation. The present village of al-Ashmunain is situated near the famous city of Schmunu, which was the chief place of worship of Tût, the god of writing and of science. Furthermore, it was also the capital of the Hare-Nome of Upper Egypt. Fr. Claude Sicard, who visited this town in 1716 wrote to the Count of Toulouse that it contained the remains of a large number of palaces, of marble and granite columns, all of which pointed to its former splendour. Recent excavations at the « Great City of Hermes » as carried out by Dr. Sami Gabra, substantiate that the site of Hermopolis Magna was one of the most important cities in ancient Egyptian history.

A local oral tradition in the village of Dair al-Barsha, on the east bank of the Nile opposite of Mallawî, states that the Holy Family visited the village and stayed for some time

in a cave nearby. The Maghârat al-Adhra, the Cave of the Holy Virgin, is situated in the mountain east of Dair al-Barsha. Normally, the cave is locked with an iron door, and those interested to visit it ought to obtain the key from the Coptic priest either in Dair al-Barsha or in Dair Abû Hinnis. On the east wall of the cave, there is a painting on plaster showing the Holy Virgin seated on a chair and knitting. Moreover, there is a carpenter's bench and a plane, objects which according to tradition were used by St. Joseph. Every year, at the occasion of the Feast of St. Bishoi on July 15, people visit the cave in commemoration of the visit and stay of the Holy Family in Dair al-Barsha.

A similar tradition is related in the neighbouring Coptic village of Dair Abû Hinnis. Here the villagers point to the Cave Church of St. John on the slopes of the mountains east of the village as the site which provided shelter for the Holy Family.

There is good reason to believe that the Holy Family returned to Palestine by the same way which they had come. According to the *Coptic Synaxarium,* on their return the Holy Family lodged in a cave which to-day is situated beneath the Church of St. Sergius (Abû Sargah) in Old Cairo, the ancient Babylon of Egypt. Supposedly, this church was built during the patriarchate of John II (505-516 A.D.).

It is quite likely that the Holy Family stayed for some time at Babylon, where since the days of the Exile (597-538 B.C.) Jews had lived. The present Synagogue of Abraham Ben Ezra (ca. 1150 A.D.), the former Coptic Church of St. Michael, was built on the site of an ancient synagogue, where according to Jewish tradition, Jeremiah had preached. No doubt, the Holy Family would have been attracted to stay with their countrymen, especially since they had lived for three years in an environment which, culturally speaking, must have appeared to them so alien. An oral tradition states that at Babylon Joseph met with some members of his family who persuaded him to spend some time with them.

Babylon, according to Strabo, was a strong fortress, and as mentioned above, one of the three legions stationed in Egypt was encamped here. A mountainous ridge extended from the encampment as far as the Nile. At this ridge, the Holy Family must have seen the wheels and screws by which water was raised from the river. One hundred and fifty prisoners were employed in the operation of this aqueduct. It should be remembered, however, that, since the construction of the fortress, the Nile has changed its course, which means, that the Nile flows now some 400 m. farther west than it did then. The present ruins of Babylon near the Coptic Museum in Old Cairo, however, are the remains of second century fortifications. Trajan (98-117 A.D.) had replaced the older encampment which was situated on higher ground in order to obtain better water supply and river communication.

The tradition of their visit to Babylon is well attested by the Synaxaria and the reports of the pilgrims. When the pilgrim of Placentia, known as Antoninus Martyr (560-570 A.D.), passed through Egypt, he saw at Memphis *(sic)* a temple, which is now a church, a door of which had closed of its own accord before our Lord when He was there with the Blessed Virgin, and it could not be opened. « There he saw a linen cloth, upon which was a portrait of the Saviour, Who, as the people said, wiped His face upon it, and His image remained there. This image is adored at certain times, and we adored it, but because of its brightness we were not able to look fixedly upon it, because the more earnestly you fix your gaze upon it, the more it changes before your eyes ». The fact that our pilgrim speaks of Memphis does not necessarily exclude the probability that his report really refers to Babylon, for it is well known that Arab writers often transferred the name of Memphis to Misr al-Kadîmah. They imagined, indeed, that the city of Memphis had occupied the site of Babylon. Furthermore, Alfred Butler points out that, at the time of Diocletian, the city names of Memphis and Babylon were used interchangeably.

For the mediaeval pilgrims to the Holy Land, the Cave

of the Holy Family was a site which was included in their itineraries. John Poloner (1421) went out of his way to visit the underground chapel, where he saw a cross which had been made over the place where the Babe had slept. At the time of his visit, the church was called the Church of Our Lady of Cana in Babylon. Felix Fabri (1483) refers to the church which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, where they took out their processionals and made a tour of the building, visiting the crypt, and noticing near the altar in the upper church a great deep hole, like a big tomb, full of water, from which they were told Joseph drew water for washing the Divine Child. That Western Christians also accepted this tradition is confirmed by the fact that until the 18th century, the Franciscan Friars used to celebrate the Holy Mass on the altar in the crypt.

The crypt is situated beneath the centre of the choir and part of the central sanctuary of the Church of St. Sergius. It is entered by two stairways which lead down from the northern and southern sanctuaries. During the inundation of the Nile, this crypt is flooded for about two months. By its contact with this sacred spot, this water is considered holy, and is much resorted to by the faithful.

From Babylon, the Holy Family continued their way northwards, stopping again at On, near the site of the present village of Matariya. Here they bathed, and the well was blessed thereby. To-day, Matariya is a townlet which can be reached from Cairo by bus or train. The sycamore-tree stands in a small garden enclosed by a wall on the righthand side of the main street coming from Cairo, just before the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Matariya.

The next place which the Holy Family is said to have visited on their return to Palestine was al-Mahammah, or the place of bathing. In ancient times, a temple with many idols stood there, which, however, collapsed and broke into pieces when the Holy Family came near. According to the *Coptic Synaxarium,* a source of water commemorates the place where the Holy Family bathed.

We should remember that the practice of frequent lustrations, partial or entire, was enjoined on all Jews by the Law, while on the other hand, the Graeco-Roman habit of bathing the entire body must have penetrated far down through the social strata of the day. This would explain, at least to some extent, the emphasis laid upon springs and wells as stopping-places for the Holy Family.

In the Church of the Blessed Virgin at Musturud, about 3 km. west of Matariya, on the western bank of the Ismailia Canal, there is to this day a well which was blessed by the Holy Family. The well is situated in the north-east corner of the church, east of the cave, where the Holy Family found shelter. Stairs from the east and the west lead down to the cave to which thousands of people come for the annual fair (mûlid) which is held between August 7th and 22nd.

From al-Mahammah, the next halting-place of the Holy Family was Leontopolis, known to-day as the ruins of Tell al-Yahûdiyah and referred to in old Roman maps as Vicus Judaeorum. An oral tradition of the Christians of Shibîn al-Qanâtir (2 Km. north-west of the ancient Leontopolis) states that the Holy Family visited their country-men who had settled around the Temple of Onias. The highpriest Onias IV went to Egypt in 154 B.C. to seek aid against the tyranny of the Seleucids at the court of the Ptolemies who were their political enemies. With the permission of Ptolemy IV (Philometer) he built at Leontopolis a temple which, though comparatively small, was modeled on that of Jerusalem. This town was so important that after the destruction of Heliopolis, it became the capital of the Nome of Heliopolis.

Onias doubtless expected that after the desecration of the Temple in Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes (170 B.C.), the Egyptian temple would be regarded as the only legitimate one, but the traditional teachings of Judaism as contained in the Mishnah conceded only quasi-legitimate status to the temple of Onias, in fact even for the Egyptian Jews the latter did not possess the same importance as did the Temple in Jerusalem.

To-day, most of the ruins are buried in rubbish.

From Tell al-Yahûdiyah, the Holy Family returned to Palestine the same way they had come to Egypt, passing through Bilbais, the Wâdî Tumilât, the isthmus at al-Qantara, and then travelling on the caravan-route from Egypt to Palestine along the Mediterranean coast. According to a local tradition, the Holy Family rested for several days near Gaza. In a garden between the Gabal Muntar and Gaza, the Christians of Gaza point out the place where the Holy Family stayed on their return.

Generally speaking, the Holy Family would have stayed with people whose acquaintance they had made during their travels in Egypt, except, of course, where they chose to journey by a different route. *The Infancy Gospel of St. Thomas* records that one day the three years old Jesus joined some boys who were playing. He took a dried fish and put it into a basin and commanded it to move to and fro, and it began to move. Then He said to the fish : « Cast out the salt which is in thee and go into the water, and it came to pass ». But when the neighbours saw what was done, they told it to the widow in whose house His Mother dwelt. And she, when she heard it, hastened and cast them out of her house.

When the Holy Family entered Palestine, Joseph heard « that Aerchelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither, notwithstanding being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee, and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene ». (*Matt.* 2:22-23).

And so our story comes to an end. We have travelled in the steps of the Holy Family from Bethlehem to Upper Egypt and back to Palestine. We have seen how the Divine Child and His Mother blessed the Land of Egypt and wrought miracles in it, and, if the night still seems dark, yet may we

comfort ourselves with the assurance that it is ever darkest before the dawn — that glorious dawn, when from the Land of Egypt and all her borders there shall resound hymns of praise to the Divine Child and His Mother, for it is written : « This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith ».

CHAPTER XXXII

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHRISTIAN EGYPT

GENERAL HISTORY

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